God
823
Coo/Rav
76456

BOMBAY BRANCH

OF THE

Royal Asiatic Society.

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 15 March, 2016

C

RAVENSNEST;

OR,

THE REDSKINS.

76456

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"THE PILOT," "THE PATHFINDER," "DEERSLAYER,"
"TWO ADMIRALS," &c.

J. F. Cooper

In every work regard the writer's end;
None e'er can compass more than they intend.
POPE.

KX-C 420

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

[illegible]

LONDON:
RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.
1846.

בית
[illegible]
COO/PGV
95 פע 7

RAVENSNEST;

OR,

THE REDSKINS.

CHAPTER I.

"With all thy rural echoes come,
Sweet comrade of the rosy day,
Wafting the wild bee's gentle hum,
Or cuckoo's plaintive roundelay."

CAMPBELL.

THAT night was passed under my own roof, in the family circle. Although my presence on the estate was now generally known, to all who were interested in it, I cannot say that I thought much of the anti-renters, or of any risks incurred by the discovery. The craven spirit manifested by the "Injins" in presence of the Indians, the assumed before the real, had not a tendency to awaken much respect for the disaffected, and quite likely disposed me to be

more indifferent to their proceedings, than I might otherwise have been. At all events, I was happy with Patt, and Mary, and my uncle's wards, and did not give the disorganizers a thought, until quite at the close of the evening. The manner in which John went about to barricade the doors and windows, after the ladies had retired, struck me unpleasantly, however, and it did not fail to produce the same effect on my uncle. This seemingly important duty was done, when my faithful *maître-d'hotel*, for such, in a measure, was the Englishman's station, came to me, and my uncle, who were waiting for his appearance in the library, armed like Robinson Crusoe. He brought us each a revolving pistol, and a rifle, with a proper allowance of ammunition.

"Missus," so John persevered in calling my grandmother, though it was very unlike an English servant to do so, after he had been in the country three months—"Missus as hordered harms to be laid in, in quantities, Mr. Hugh, and hall of us has our rifles and pistols, just like these. She keeps some for herself and Miss Martha, in her own room still, but as she supposes you can make better use of these than the maids, I had her orders to bring them

down out of the maids' room, and hoffer them to yourselves, gentlemen. They are hall loaded, and smart weapons be they."

"Surely there has been no occasion as yet, for using such things as these!" exclaimed my uncle.

"One doesn't know, Mr. Roger, when the hinimy may come. We have had only three alarms since the ladies arrived, and most luckily no blood was shed; though we fired at the hinimy, and the hinimy fired at us. When I says no blood was spilt, I should add, on our side; for there was no way to know how much the anti's suffered, and they hadn't good stone walls to cover them, as we 'ad on our side."

"Gracious Providence! I had no notion of this! Hugh, the country is in a worse state than I had supposed, and we ought not to leave the ladies here an hour after to-morrow!"

As the ladies who came within my uncle's category did not include Mary Warren, I did not take exactly the same view of the subject as he did himself. Nothing further was said on the subject, however; and shortly after each shouldered his rifle, and retired to his own room.

It was past midnight when I reached my apartment, but I felt no inclination for sleep. That had been an important day to me, one full of excitement, and I was still too much under the influence of its circumstances to think of my bed. There was soon a profound silence in the house, the closing of doors and the sound of footsteps having ceased, and I went to a window, to gaze on the scene without. There was a three-quarters' moon, which gave light enough to render all the nearer objects of the landscape distinctly visible. The view had nothing remarkable in it, but it was always rural and pretty. The little river, and the broad meadows, were not to be seen from my side of the house, which commanded the carriage road that wound through the lawn —the farm-house—the distant church—the neat and pretty rectory—the dwelling of Mary, and a long reach of farms, that lay along the valley, and on the broad breast of the rising ground to the westward.

Everything, far and near, seemed buried in the quiet of deep night. Even the cattle in the fields had lain down to sleep; for, like man, they love to follow the law of nature, and divide the hours by light and darkness.

John had placed the candles in my dressing-room, and closed the inner-shutters; but I had taken a seat by a window of the bed-room, and sat in no other light but that which came from the moon, which was now near setting. I might have been ruminating on the events of the day half an hour or more, when I fancied some object was in motion on a path that led towards the village, but which was quite distinct from the ordinary highway. This path was private, indeed, running fully a mile through my own farm and grounds, bounded for a considerable distance by high fences on each side of it, and running among the copses and thickets of the lawn, as soon as it emerged from the fields. It had been made in order to enable my grandfather to ride to his fields, uninterrupted by gates or bars; and issuing into the bit of forest already described, it passed through that by a short cut, and enabled us to reach the hamlet by a road that saved nearly a mile in the whole distance. This path was often used by those who left the Nest, or who came to it, in the saddle, but rarely by any but those who belonged to the family. Though old as the place itself, it was little known by others, not suiting the general taste for pub-

licity, there not being a solitary dwelling on it between the Nest House itself and the point where it emerged into the highway, beyond the wood, which was quite near to the village.

I could see the whole line of this private path, with the exception, here and there, of intervals that were hid by trees and thickets, from the point where it terminated until it entered the wood. There could be no mistake. Late as was the hour, some one mounted was galloping along that path, winding his or *her* way among the rails of the fences; now plainly visible, then lost to view. I had caught a glimpse of this phantom, (for at that unusual hour, and by that delusive light, it required no great effort of the imagination thus to fancy the equestrian,) just as it emerged from the wood, and could not well be mistaken as to the accuracy of my discovery. The path led through a pretty wooded ravine in the lawn, and no sooner did I lose sight of this strange object than I turned my eyes eagerly to the spot where it ought to reappear, on emerging from its cover.

The path lay in shadow for twenty rods on quitting the ravine, after which it wound across the lawn to the door, for about twice that dis-

tance, in full moonlight. At the termination of the shadow there was a noble oak, which stood alone, and beneath its wide branches was a seat much frequented by the ladies in the heats of summer. My eye kept moving from this point, where the light became strong, to that where the path issued from the ravine. At the latter it was just possible to distinguish a moving object, and, sure enough, there I got my next view of the person I was watching. The horse came up the ascent on a gallop—a pace that was continued, until its rider drew the rein beneath the oak. Here, to my surprise, a female sprang from the saddle with great alacrity, and secured her steed within the shadow of the tree. This was no sooner done than she moved on towards the house, in much apparent haste. Fearful of disturbing the family, I now left my room on tiptoe, and without a candle, the light of the moon penetrating the passages in sufficient quantity to serve my purpose, descending as fast as possible to the lower floor. Swift and prompt as had been my own movement, it had been anticipated by another. To my great surprise, on reaching the little side-door to which the path

led, and where the ladies had long been accustomed to get into the saddle, when they used it, I found a female figure, with her hand on the massive lock, as if ready to turn its key at some expected summons. To my great astonishment, on drawing nearer, I recognised, by the faint light that penetrated through a little window over the door, the person of Mary Warren!

I certainly started at this unexpected discovery, but, if she who caused that start in me submitted to any similar emotion, I did not discover it. She may have heard my step, however, descending the stairs, and have been prepared for the meeting.

"You have seen her, too, have you, Mr. Littlepage?" exclaimed Mary, though she used the precaution to speak in a suppressed tone. "What *can* have brought her here at this late hour?"

"You know who it is, then, Miss Warren?" I answered, feeling an indescribable pleasure succeed my surprise, as I remembered the dear girl, who was fully dressed, just as she left the drawing-room an hour before, must have been gazing out upon the moonlight view as well as

myself; a species of romance that proved something like a similarity of tastes, if not a secret sympathy between us.

"Certainly," returned Mary, steadily. "I cannot well be mistaken in the person, I think. It is Opportunity Newcome."

My hand was on the key, and I turned it in the lock. A bar remained, and this I also removed, when we opened the door. Sure enough, there came the person just named, within ten feet of the steps, which she doubtless intended to ascend. She manifested surprise on ascertaining who were her porters, but hastened into the house, looking anxiously behind her, as if distrustful of pursuit or observation. I led the way to the library, lighted its lamp, and then turned to my two silent companions, looking a request for explanation.

Opportunity was a young woman, in her twenty-sixth year, and was not without considerable personal charms. The exercise and excitement through which she had just gone had heightened the colour in her cheeks, and rendered her appearance unusually pleasing. Nevertheless, Opportunity was not a woman to awaken anything like the passion of love in me, though I had long been aware such was her

purpose. I suspected that her present business was connected with this scheme, I will own, and was prepared to listen to her communication with distrust. As for Opportunity herself, she hesitated about making her disclosures, and the very first words she uttered were anything but delicate or feminine.

"Well, I declare!" exclaimed Opportunity, "I did not expect to find you two alone at this time of night!"

I could have given her tongue a twitch to cure it of its propensity to speak evil, but concern for Mary Warren induced me to turn anxiously towards her. Never did the steady self-possession of perfect innocence better assert itself than in the dear girl at this rude assault; the innocence which can leave no latent intention, or wish, to alarm the feelings.

"We had all retired," answered the pure-minded girl, "and everybody on my side of the house is in bed and asleep, I believe; but I did not feel any drowsiness, and was sitting at a window, looking out upon the view by this lovely moonlight, when I saw you ride out of the woods, and follow the lane. As you came up to the oak I knew who it was, Opportunity, and ran down to admit you; for I was certain

something extraordinary must bring you here at this late hour."

"Oh! nothing extraordinary, at all!" cried Miss Opportunity, in a careless way. "I love moonlight as well as yourself, Mary, and am a desperate horsewoman, as you know. I thought it would be romantic to gallop over to the Nest, and go back between one and two in the morning. Nothing more, I can assure you."

The coolness with which this was said amazed me not a little, though I was not so silly as to believe a syllable of it. Opportunity had a great deal of vulgar sentimentalism about her, it is true—such as some girls are apt to mistake for refinement; but she was not quite so bad as to travel that lane, at midnight, and alone, without some special object. It occurred to me that this object might be connected with her brother, and that she would naturally wish to make her communications privately. We had all taken seats at a table which occupied the centre of the room, Mary and myself quite near each other, and Opportunity at a distant angle. I wrote on a slip of paper a short request for Mary to leave me alone with our visitor, and laid it under her eyes, without exciting Opportunity's suspicion; talking to her, the whole

time, about the night, and the weather, and her ride. While we were thus engaged, Miss Warren rose, and quietly glided out of the room. So silently was this done, that I do not believe my remaining companion was conscious of it at the moment.

"You have driven Mary Warren away, Miss Opportunity," I remarked, "by the hint about our being alone together."

"Lord! there's no great harm in that! I am used to being alone with gentlemen, and think nothing of it. But, are we really alone, Mr. Hugh, and quite by ourselves?"

"Quite, as you see. Our two selves and Mary Warren I believe to be the only persons in the house, out of our beds. She has left us, a little hurt, perhaps, and we are quite alone."

"Oh! As for Mary Warren's feelings, I don't mind them much, Mr. Hugh. She's a good critter"—yes, this elegant young lady actually used that extraordinary word—"and as forgiving as religion. Besides, she's only the episcopal clergyman's daughter; and, take your family away, that's a denomination that would not stand long at Ravensnest, I can tell you."

"I am very glad, then, my family is not away, for it is a denomination I both honour

and love. So long as the grasping and innovating spirit of the times leaves the Littlepages anything, a fair portion of their means shall be given to support that congregation. As for Miss Warren, I am pleased to hear that her temperament is so forgiving."

"I know that well, and did not speak in the hope of making any change in your views, Mr. Hugh. Mary Warren, however, will not think much of my remark to-morrow; I do not believe she thought half as much about it to-night, as I should have done, had it been made to *me*."

I fancy this was quite true; Mary Warren, having listened to the insinuation as the guileless and innocent hear innuendos that bring no consciousness with them, while Opportunity's spirit would have been very apt to buckle on the armour which practice had rendered well-fitting.

"You have not taken this long ride merely to admire the moon, Miss Opportunity," I now carelessly remarked, willing to bring things to a head. "If you would favour me with its real object, I should be pleased to learn it."

"What if Mary should be standing at the keyhole, listening?" said this elegant "critter," with the suspicion of a vulgar mind. "I

wouldn't have her hear what I've got to tell you, for a mint of money."

"I do not think there is much danger of that," I answered, rising notwithstanding, and throwing open the door. "You perceive there is no one here, and we can converse in safety."

Opportunity was not so easily satisfied. Of a gossiping, craving disposition herself, in all things that pertain to curiosity, it was not easy for her to imagine another could be less guided by that feeling than herself. Rising, therefore, she went on tiptoe to the passage, and examined it for herself. Satisfied, at length, that we were not watched, she returned to the room, closed the door softly, motioned for me to be seated, placed herself quite near me, and then appeared disposed to proceed to business.

"This has been a dreadful day, Mr. Hugh," the young woman now commenced, actually looking sorrowful, as I make little doubt she really felt. "Who could have thought that the street-musician was you, and that old German pedlar of watches, Mr. Roger! I declare, the world seems to be getting upside-down, and folks don't know when they're in their right places!"

"It was a foolish adventure, perhaps; but it has let us into some most important secrets."

"That's just the difficulty. I defend you all I can, and tell my brothers that you have not done anything they wouldn't do in a minute, if only half a farm depended on it, while, in your case, it may be more than a hundred."

"Your brothers then complain of my having appeared among the anti-renters, in disguise?"

"They do, desperately, Mr. Hugh, and seem quite put out about it. They say it was ungenerous to come in that way into your own country, and steal their secrets from them! I say all I can in your favour, but words wont pass for much with men in such a taking. You know, Mr. Hugh, I've always been your friend, even from our childish days, having got myself into more than one scrape to get you out of them."

As Opportunity made this declaration, one a little loose as to facts, by the way, she sighed gently, dropped her eyes, and looked as conscious and confused as I believe it was at all in her nature to appear. It was not my cue to betray undue bashfulness at such a moment, and as for any scruples on the subject of misleading a confiding heart, I should as soon have thought of feeding an anaconda or a

boa constrictor with angle-worms. I took the young lady's hand, therefore, squeezed it with as sentimental a pressure as I knew how to use, and looked green enough about the eyes, I dare say.

"You are only too good, Opportunity," I answered. "Yes, I have ever relied on you as a friend, and have never doubted you would defend me, when I was not present to defend myself."

Here I released the hand, a little apprehensive I might have the young lady sobbing on my shoulder, unless some little moderation were observed. Opportunity manifested a reluctance to let go her hold, but what could a young woman do, when the gentleman himself exhibited so much discretion?

"Yes, Seneky, in particular, is in a dreadful taking," she resumed, "and to pacify him, I consented to ride over myself, at this time of night, to let you know what is threatened."

"That is most kind of you, Opportunity; and, as it is so late, had you not better tell your story at once, and then go to a room and rest yourself, after so sharp a ride?"

"Tell my tale I will, for it's high time you heard it; but, as for rest, I must jump on

my horse and gallop back the moment the moon sets; sleep I must in my own bed this night. Of course you and Mary Warren will both be silent as to my visit, since it has been made for your good."

I promised for myself and Mary, and then pressed my companion to delay no longer in imparting the information she had ridden so far to bring. The story was soon told, and proved to be sufficiently alarming. One portion of the facts I got directly from Opportunity herself, while another has been subsequently gleaned from various sources, all being certain. The particular circumstances were these:—

When Seneca followed the band of "Injins" and his co-anti-renters, in their precipitate retreat on the hamlet, his revelations produced a general consternation. It then became known that the young Paris spendthrift was on his own estate, that he had actually been among the disaffected that day, had learned many of their secrets, and had probably made black marks against certain of the tenants, whose leases were nearly expired. Bad as this was, of itself, it was not the worst of the matter. Nothing was more certain than the fact that this young landlord knew a few of those who

had committed felony, and might have sundry highly probable suspicions as to others. The guilty lay at his mercy, as a matter of course; and there was a sufficiency of common sense left among these conspirators, to understand that a man, who must feel that attempts were making to rob him of his estate, would be very likely to turn the tables on his assailants, did an occasion offer. When men embark in an undertaking as innately nefarious as that of anti-rentism certainly is, when it is stripped of its pretensions and stands in its naked deformity, they are not apt to stop at trifles. To this desperate character of its mischief, the country owes the general depression of truth that has accompanied its career, its false and dangerous principles, its confusion between right and wrong, and finally its murders. It has been the miserable prerogative of demagogues alone, to defend its career and its demoralization. Thus has it happened, that the country has seen the same quasi legislators—legislators, by the vote of a party and the courtesy of the country, if by no other tenure—supporting, with an air of high pretension, the very doubtful policy of attempting to make men moral by statute law, on the one side, while they go the

full length of these property-depredators, on the other! In such a state of society, it is not surprising that any expedient should be adopted to intimidate and bully me into silence. It was consequently determined, in a conclave of the chiefs, that a complaint should be made against my uncle and myself, before an anti-rent justice of the peace, for felony under the recent statute, in appearing "disguised and armed," as a means of preventing our complaints against the real offenders. It is true, we were not in masks; but our disguises, nevertheless, were so effectual as possibly to meet the contingency contemplated by the law, had we been armed. As to weapons, however, we had been totally and intentionally without anything of the sort; but oaths cost villains, like those engaged in this plot, very little. Those oaths had been taken, and warrants were actually signed by the magistrate, of which the service was suspended at Seneca's solicitation, merely to enable the last to effect a compromise. It was not thought sufficient, however, to menace my uncle and myself with a prosecution of this nature; intimidation of another sort was to be put in requisition, to enforce the dread of the legal proceedings; a measure which should let us see

that our assailants were in downright earnest. Opportunity had ascertained that something serious was to be attempted, and she believed that very night, though what it was precisely was more than she knew; or, knowing, was willing to communicate.

The object of this late visit, then, was to make terms for her brother, or brothers; to apprize me of some unknown but pressing danger, and to obtain all that influence in my breast that might fairly be anticipated from services so material. Beyond a question, I was fortunate in having such a friend in the enemy's camp, though past experience had taught me to be wary how I trusted my miserable and sensitive heart within the meshes of a net that had been so often cast.

"I am very sensible of the importance of your services, Miss Opportunity," I said, when the voluble young lady had told her tale, "and shall not fail to bear it in mind. As for making any direct arrangement with your brother Seneca, that is out of the question, since it would be compromising felony, and subject me to punishment; but I can be passive, if I see fit, and your wishes will have great weight with me. The attempt to arrest my uncle and

myself, should it ever be made, will only subject its instigators to action for malicious prosecutions, and gives me no concern. It is very doubtful how far we were disguised, in the sense of the statute, and it is certain we were not armed, in any sense. Without perjury, therefore, such a prosecution must fail ——."

"Folks take desperate oaths in anti-rent times!" interrupted Opportunity, with a significant look.

"I am quite aware of that. Human testimony, at the best, is very frail, and often to be distrusted; but in seasons of excitement, and passion, and cupidity, it is common to find it corrupt. The most material thing, at present, is to know precisely the nature of the evil they meditate against us."

Opportunity's eye did not turn away, as mine was fastened on her while she answered this question, but retained all the steadiness of sincerity.

"I wish I could tell you, Mr. Hugh," she said; "but I can say no more than I have. Some injury will be attempted this night, I feel certain; but what that injury will be, is more than I know myself. I must now go home; for the moon will be nearly down, and it would

never do for me to be seen by any of the antis. The little I *have* said in favour of the Littlepages has made me enemies, as it is; but I never should be forgiven, was this ride to be known."

Opportunity now rose, and smiling on me, as any other rover might be supposed to fire a parting broadside, in order to render the recollection of her presence as memorable as possible, she hurried away. I accompanied her to the oak, as a matter of course, and assisted her into her saddle. Sundry little passages of country coquetry occurred during these movements, and the young lady manifested a reluctance to depart, even when all was ready, though she was in so great a hurry. Her game was certainly as desperate as that of the anti-renters themselves, but it was a game she was determined to play out. The moon was not yet quite down, and that circumstance served as a pretence for delay, while I fancied that she might still have something in reserve to communicate.

"This has been so kind in you, dear Opportunity," I said, laying my hand gently on the one of hers which held the bridle—"so like old times—so like yourself, indeed—that I scarce know how to thank you. But we shall live to

have old-fashioned times again, when the former communications can be opened among us. Those were happy days, when we all went galloping over the hills together; mere boys and girls, it is true, but delighted boys and girls I hope you will allow."

"That they was"—Opportunity's education and graces did not extend to good grammar, in her ordinary discourse, which many persons among us seem to fancy is anti-republican—"That they was! And I should like to live 'em over again. Never mind, Hugh; you'll live to put down these people, and then you'll settle and marry. You mean to marry, of course?"

This was a pretty plain demonstration; but I was used to it, as what young man of fortune is not?—and a danger known is a danger avoided. I pressed the hand I held gently, relinquished it, and then observed, in a somewhat disappointed tone—

"Well, I ought not to ask again, what is the particular injury I am to expect to-night. A brother is nearer than a friend, I know; and I can appreciate your difficulties."

Opportunity had actually given the spirited beast she rode the rein, and was on the point of galloping off, when these last words touched her

heart. Leaning forward, and bending her head down, so as to bring our faces within a foot of each other, she said, in a low voice—

"*Fire* is a good servant, but a hard master. A tea-kettle of water thrown on it, at first, would have put out the last great conflagration in York."

These words were no sooner uttered than the bold young woman struck her horse a smart blow, and away she went, galloping over the turf, with an almost noiseless hoof. I watched her for a moment, and saw her descend into the ravine; when, left quite alone, there was abundant opportunity for reflection, though no longer any Opportunity to look at.

"Fire!"—That *was* an ominous word. It is the instrument of the low villain, and is an injury against which it is difficult, indeed, to guard. It had been used in these anti-rent troubles, though less, perhaps, than would have been the case in almost any other country; the institutions of this, even if they have introduced so many false and exaggerated notions of liberty, having had a most beneficial effect in lessening some of the other evils of humanity. Still, fire *had* been resorted to, and the term of "barn-burner" had got to be common among us; far

more common, I rejoice to say, than the practice which gave it birth. Nevertheless, it was clearly of the last importance to certain persons at Ravensnest to frighten me from complaining, since their crimes could only lead them to the State's prison, were justice done. I determined, therefore, not to lay my head on a pillow that night, until assured that the danger was past.

The moon had now set, but the stars shed their twinkling rays on the dusky landscape. I was not sorry for the change, as it enabled me to move about with less risk of being seen. The first thing was to seek some auxiliaries to aid me in watching, and I at once decided to look for them among my guests, the Indians. If 'fire will fight fire," "Indian" ought to be a match for "Injin" any day. There is just the difference between these two classes of men, that their names would imply. The one is natural, dignified, polished in his way—nay, gentleman-like; while the other is a sneaking scoundrel, and as vulgar as his own appellation. No one would think of calling these last masquerading rogues "Indians;" by common consent, even the most particular purist in language terms them "Injins." "*Il y a chapeau et chapeau,*" and there are "Indian and Injin."

Without returning to the house, I took my way at once towards the quarters of my red guests. Familiar with every object around me, I kept so much within the shadows, and moved across the lawn and fields by a route so hidden, that there was not much risk of my being seen, even had there been enemies on the look-out. The distance was not great, and I soon stood at the foot of the little knoll on which the old farm-house stood, sheltered in a manner by a dark row of aged currants, which lined the bottom of an old and half-deserted garden. Here I paused to look about me, and to reflect a moment, before I proceeded any further.

There stood the good, old, substantial residence of my fathers, in shadowy outline, looming large and massive in its form and aspect. It might be fired, certainly, but not with much facility, on its exterior. With the exception of its roof, its piazza, and its outside-doors, little wood was exposed to an incendiary without; and a slight degree of watchfulness might suffice against such a danger. Then the law punished arson of an inhabited dwelling with death, as it should do, and your sneaking scoundrels seldom brave such a penalty in this country. Much is said about the impotency of

the punishment of the gallows, but no man can tell how many thousand times it has stayed the hand and caused the heart to quail. Until some one can appear among us, who is able to reveal this important secret, it is idle to talk about the few cases in which it is known that the risk of death has been insufficient to prevent crime. One thing we all know; other punishments exist, and crime is perpetrated directly in *their* face, daily and hourly; and I cannot see why such a circumstance should not be just as much of an argument against the punishment of the penitentiary, as against punishment by the gallows. For one, I am clearly for keeping in existence the knowledge that there is a power in the country, potent to sweep away the offender, when cases of sufficient gravity occur to render the warning wholesome.

CHAPTER II.

"Oh, time and death! with certain pace,
Though still unequal, hurrying on,
O'erturning, in your awful race,
The cot, the palace, and the throne!

"Not always in the storm of war,
Nor by the pestilence that sweeps
From the plague-smitten realms afar,
Beyond the old and solemn deeps"

SANDS.

BESIDES the house with its walls of stone, however, there were numerous out-buildings. The carriage-house, stables, and home-barn, were all of stone also; but a brand thrown into a hay-mow would easily produce a conflagration. The barns, hay-ricks, &c., on the flats, and near the dwelling of Miller, were all of wood, according to the custom of the country, and it was not death to set fire to a barn. The "disguised and armed" who should commit this last offence, would incur no other risk than that

which had already been incurred in carrying out his desperate plans. I thought of these things for a moment, when I opened a passage through the currant-bushes, intending to pass by a breach in the decayed fence into the garden, and thus by a private way to the house. To my astonishment, and in a slight degree to my alarm, a man stood before me the instant I emerged from the thicket.

"Who be—where go—what want?" demanded one of the real redskins, significantly; this being a sentinel of the party whose vigilance even my guarded approach had not eluded.

I told him who I was, and that I came to seek the interpreter Manytongues. No sooner was I recognised, than my red friend offered me his hand to shake, American fashion, and seemed satisfied. He asked no question, manifested no curiosity at this visit at an hour so unusual, and took it all as one in ordinary life would receive a call in a morning between the permitted hours of twelve and three. *Something* had brought me there, he must have known; but, what that something was appeared to give him no concern. This man accompanied me to the house, and pointed to the spot where I

should find the person I sought, snoring on his well-shaken bundles of straw.

At the first touch of my finger, Manytongues awoke, and stood erect. He recognised me in an instant, dark as was the room, and touching my arm as a signal to follow, led the way into the open air. After moving out of ear-shot, he stopped and proceeded to business himself, like one accustomed to such interruptions.

"Anything stirring to-night?" demanded this frontier-man, with the coolness of one who was ever ready. "Am I to call my redskins; or is it only a notice that is to be given?"

"Of that you shall judge for yourself. You doubtless know the condition of this part of the country, and the troubles that exist on the subject of the rents paid for the use of the farms. What you saw to-day is a specimen of the scenes that are now constantly acted among us."

"Colonel, I can't say I do rightly understand the state of things down here-a-way," drawled out the interpreter, after yawning like a hound, and giving me the most favourite title of the frontiers. "It's seems to be neither one thing nor t'other; nuther tomahawk nor law. I can

understand both of *them*, but this half-and-half sort of thing bothers me, and puts me out. You ought to have law, or you hadn't ought; but what you have should be stuck to."

"You mean that you do not find this part of the country either civilized or savage. Not submitting to the laws, nor yet permitting the natural appeal to force?"

"Something of that sort. The agent told me, when I came on with this party of redskins, that I was comin' down into a quarter of the country where there was justices of the peace, and that no man, red or pale, could or should right himself. So we've all on us endivoured to go by that rule; and I can qualify that not a critter has been shot or scalped since we crossed the Mississippi. Some sich law was necessary among us, as we came from different and hostile tribes, and nothing would be easier than to breed a quarrel among ourselves, if a body was so disposed. But, I must say, that I'm not only disapp'inted myself, but most of my chiefs be dreadfully disapp'inted likewise."

"In what particular have you been most disappointed?"

"In many matters. The first thing that set

me a-thinkin' was to hear folks read them newspapers. The way men talk of each other, in them things, is wonderful, and to me it's a surprise any's left, at the end of the year, to begin the same game the next. Why, Colonel Littlepage—"

"I am no colonel—not even an ensign—you must be confounding me with some other of my family."

"You *ought* to be, sir, and I shall not do you the injustice to call you by any lower title. I've known gentlemen of not one quarter your pretensions tarmed gin'rals, out West. I've hunted on the prer-ies these twenty-five years, and have now crossed the Upper Lakes six times, and know what is due to a gentleman as well as any man. And so, as I was sayin', Colonel Littlepage, was men to *talk* of each other out on the prer-ies as they *print* of each other down here among the meetin-'uses, scalps would be so plenty as to fall considerable in valie. I'm not at all spiteful, but my feelin's has been r'iled at only just *hearin'* 'em things *read*; for, as for reading myself, that's a thing I never condescended to. This somewhat prepared me for findin' things different as I got

deeper into the settlements, and I've not been disapp'inted so far as them expectations went—its the old idee that's been crossed."

"I am not astonished to hear this, and agree with you entirely in thinking, that the nations which can withstand a press, of which the general character is as degraded as that of this country, must be composed of beings of a higher order than man. But, to come to business; you must have some notions of these mock savages, and of the people called anti-renters?"

"Sort o', and sort o' not. I can't understand when a man has agreed to pay rent, why he should not pay it. A bargain is a bargain, and the word of a gentleman is as good as his bond."

"These opinions would surprise some among us, a few legislators included. *They* appear to think that the moral test of every engagement is whether the parties like it or not."

"One word, if you please, Colonel. Do they give in as much to complaints of the owners of the sile as to the complaints of them that hire the land in order to work it?"

"Not at all. The complaints of the land lords would not find a single sympathetic chord in the breast of the softest-hearted politician in

America, let them be ever so well founded. Surely, *you*, who are a rover on the prairies, can have no great respect for land titles?"

"The prer-ie is the prer-ie, Colonel, and men live and act by prer-ie law on prer-ie ground. But right is right, too, Colonel, as well as prer-ie is prer-ie; and I like to see it prevail. I do not think you will find a red-skin among all the chiefs who are asleep under that roof, who will not give his voice ag'in flying from the tarms of a solemn bargain. A man must be well steeped in the ways of the law, I should judge, to bring his mind to such an act."

"Do these red-men, then, know anything of the nature of the difficulties that exist here?"

"They have heard on 'em, and have talked a good deal together on the subject. It's opposyte to the very natur' of an Indian, like, to agree to one thing, and to do another. But, here is a Chippewa, who is on the look-out. I will ask him a question, and you shall hear his answer."

Manytongues now spoke to the sentinel, who was sauntering near. After a brief exchange of questions and answers in the tongue of the latter, the interpreter communicated what had passed.

"This Chippewa has heard somewhere," he said, "that there are folks in this part of the world who get into wigwams, by agreeing to pay rent for them,—and, when once in possession, they want to fly from their agreements, and make the man they got it from prove his right to it. Is that true, Colonel?"

"It is true, out of all question; and not only do the tenants wish to enact this treachery, but they have found others, that call themselves legislators, who are willing to sustain them in the fraud. It is much as if you should borrow, or hire a rifle for a day's sporting, and when the man who let you have it came to claim it at night, you should tell him to prove he was the right owner."

"What's that to me? I got the rifle of him; have no right but such as he had; and am bound to stand by my bargain. No, no, Colonel; not a red-skin on the prer-ies but would revolutionize at that! But, what may have brought you here at this time o' night? Them that sleep in beds don't like to quit them till mornin' comes to tell 'em to rise."

I then gave Manytongues an account of the visit I had received, without mentioning the name of Opportunity, however, and related the

nature of the warning I had heard. The interpreter was, in nowise, disturbed at this prospect of a collision with the Injins, against whom he had a grudge, not only on account of the little affair of the preceding day, but mainly in consequence of their having brought real savages into discredit, by the craven and clumsy manner in which they had carried out their imitation.

"Nothin' better is to be expected from such critturs," he observed, after we had discussed the matter together at some little length, "though fire is held to be lawful warfare, even on the prer-ies. For my part, I'm not at all sorry there is something to do; nor will my chiefs be melancholy on this account, for it is dull work to be doing nothing for months and months at a time but smoking at councils, making speeches to folks who live by talking, and eating and drinking. Activity is the natur' of a prer-ie man, and he's always glad to pick his flint, after a spell of considerable quiet. I'll tell the Chippewa to step in, and bring out the redskins, a'ter which you can give your orders."

"I could wish watchfulness rather than violence. The men can lie in watch, near the principal buildings, and it might be well to

have some water ready, to extinguish any flames that may be lighted, before they get too far ahead."

"Just as you say, Colonel, for you are my Captain-General. But, I can tell you how I did once, out on the prer-ies, when I caught a rascal of a Sioux blowing a fire he had kindled at one of my own lodges. I just laid him on the flames, and let him put them out himself by bleeding on them."

"We must have no violence, unless it become indispensable to save the buildings. The law will not justify us in using our arms, except in the last extremity. Prisoners I wish you to take; for they may serve as hostages, besides furnishing examples to intimidate other offenders. I rely on you to give due warning to our red friends, on this subject."

The interpreter gave a sort of grunt, but he said nothing. The conversation went no farther, however, just then; for, by this time, the Indians came stealing out of the house, every man of them armed, looking dusky, prepared and full of wariness. Manytongues did not keep them long, but soon told his story. After this, his authority appeared, in a great measure, to cease. Flintyheart was now the most pro-

minent of the party, though Prairiefire, and another warrior, were also connected with the orders given to the rest. I observed that Eaglesflight had no part in these arrangements, which were peculiarly military, though he appeared, armed and ready, and went forth on the sudden call, like the rest. In five minutes the Indians were all off, principally in pairs, leaving the interpreter and myself still standing together, in front of the deserted house.

It was, by this time, past one o'clock, and I thought it probable my enemies would soon appear, if they came that night. Accompanied by the interpreter I took the way towards the Nest House, it occurring to me that arms might be wanted, in the course of the morning. On quitting my room, the rifle and pistol provided by John had been left there, and I thought of stealing into the house again, obtaining those weapons, extinguish my lights, and rejoin my present companion, without giving alarm to any of the sleepers.

This plan was successfully executed, so far as ascending to my room and descending to the door were concerned, but there it met with an interruption. While in the very act of closing the little postern, as we used to call it, by way

of pleasantry, I felt a small soft hand laid on the one of my own which was drawing to the door after me. In an instant I had turned, and was at the side of Mary Warren. I expressed my surprise at finding her still up, and concern lest she might suffer in health, in consequence of so much unusual watchfulness.

"I could not sleep after what has passed to-night," she answered, "without knowing the meaning of all these movements. I have been looking from my window, and saw you assist Opportunity to get on her horse, and afterward walk towards the old farm-house, where the Indians are lodged. Tell me frankly, Mr. Littlepage, is there any danger to be apprehended?"

"I shall be frank with you, Mary,"—how easy and pleasant it was to me to use this gentle familiarity, which might now be assumed without appearing to be presumptuous, under all the circumstances of our intercourse; "I shall be frank with you, Mary; for I know that your prudence and self-command will prevent any unnecessary alarm, while your watchfulness may be of use. There is some reason to fear the brand."

"The brand!"

"So Opportunity has given me reason to suppose; and I do not think she would have ridden the distance she did, at such an hour, unless her business were serious. The brand is the proper instrument of the anti-renter, and renders his disguise convenient. I have got all the red-men on the look-out, however; and I do not think that mischief can be done to-night, without its being detected. To-morrow, we can appeal to the authorities for protection."

"I will not sleep this night!" exclaimed Mary, drawing the light shawl she wore, as a protection against the air of that summer-night, more closely around her person, as a sterner being might be supposed to gird on his armour, in a moment of peril. "I care not for rest. They ought not, they *shall* not, Mr. Littlepage, do you this wrong. Have you apprehensions for this house?"

"One never knows. The house is not easily set fire to from without, and I scarcely think there can be any enemy within. The domestics are old and tried, and I do not believe that either of them could be bought. I feel little apprehension, therefore, from any within, while I confess to a good deal from those without. Fire is such a dreadful foe, and one is usually

so helpless against its ravages in the country! I will not ask you to retire, for I know you will not—nay, cannot sleep; but by passing from window to window, for the next hour, or until I rejoin you, your mind will be occupied, and possibly some injury might be prevented. An unseen observer from a window might detect an attempt that would escape those on the watch without."

"I will do so," said Mary, eagerly; "and should I discover anything, I will open a leaf of the shutter of my own room. You can then see the light of the candle within, and by coming at once to this door, you will find me here, ready to let you know my discovery."

With this understanding we parted, but not until I had shaken hands affectionately with this gentle-looking, but really resolute and clear-headed girl. I rejoined Manytongues, who stood in the shadows of the piazza, where there was no possibility of his being seen, except by one quite near his person. After a brief explanation, we parted, one taking the north side of the buildings, and the other the south, in order to make certain no incendiary was at work on either of the wings.

The Nest House was much less exposed to

attempts like those we apprehended, than most American dwellings. The structure being of stone, left but little inflammable material accessible; and the doors, on the exterior, were only two—those already mentioned. There was a great gate, it is true; one large enough to admit a cart into the inner court, on the southern face of the wing, beneath the arch of which an incendiary might, indeed, make his attempt, though a practised rogue would at once see the difficulties. Little wood was even there, beyond that of the massive gate itself, which, once burnt, would leave no further fuel for flames. I examined the place, notwithstanding; and finding all safe on my side of the building, I went to rejoin the interpreter, who was to meet me at the foot of a fine beech, which spread its broad arms over the lawn, at the distance of about a hundred yards from the house, and so nearly in its front, as to afford us, in all respects, the most eligible position for sentinels on duty like ours, far or near.

At the foot of that beech I found Many-tongues, and the deep obscurity in which his form was embedded, was, of itself, a high recommendation of the position. I did not see him until almost near enough to touch him. He

was seated on a bench, and seemed entirely at his ease, like one accustomed to ambushes, vigilance, and midnight assaults. We exchanged reports, ascertained all was well, and then I took my seat at the interpreter's side, willing to beguile the time by such discourse as occurred to my mind.

"That was a most interesting scene, last evening," I remarked; "the interview between Old Trackless and your red companions! I own a lively curiosity to know what particular claim our aged friend has on those distant tribes, that chiefs of note have come so far to see him?"

"They have not come all the way from the prer-ies, to this spot, on any such ar'n'd, though I do not question their readiness to do so. In the first place, old age, when accompanied by wisdom and sobriety, and a good character, goes a great way with savages, in gin'ral. But, there is something partic'lar about the acts of Susquesus that I do not know, which raises him higher than common in redskin eyes. I intend to l'arn what it is before we quit this country."

A pause succeeded; then I spoke of the "prer-ies," as almost all western men pronounce the word. I drew such an outline of the life

as I supposed my companion passed there, thinking it might be agreeable to hear his own habits and enjoyments extolled.

"I'll tell you how it is, Colonel," returned the interpreter, with a little show of feeling; much more than he had previously manifested on any occasion during our short acquaintance; "yes, I'll jist tell you how it is. Prer-ie life *is* delightsome to them that loves freedom and justice."

"Freedom I can understand," said I, interrupting him, in my surprise—"but as for justice, I should think that laws are absolutely necessary."

"Ay, that's a settlement idee, I know; but it's not as true as some supposes. There is no court and jury like *this*, Colonel," slapping the breech of his rifle with energy; "and eastern powder conspired with Galena lead, makes the best of attorneys. I've tried both, and speak on sartainty. Law druv' me out upon the prer-ies, and love for them keeps me there. Down this-a-way, you're neither one thing nor tuther —law nor rifle; for, if you *had* law, as law *ought* to be, you and I wouldn't be sitting here, at this time of night, to prevent your mock Injins from setting fire to your houses and barns."

There was only too much truth in this last position of the straightforward interpreter to be gainsaid. After making some proper allowances for the difficulties of the case, and the unexpected circumstances, no impartial man could deny that the laws had been trifled with, or things never would have reached the pass they had: as Manytongues affirmed, we had neither the protection of the law, nor the use of the rifle. It ought to be written in letters of brass in all the highways and places of resort in the country, that A STATE OF SOCIETY WHICH PRETENDS TO THE PROTECTION THAT BELONGS TO CIVILIZATION, AND FAILS TO GIVE IT, ONLY MAKES THE CONDITION OF THE HONEST PORTION OF THE COMMUNITY SO MUCH THE WORSE, BY DEPRIVING IT OF THE PROTECTION CONFERRED BY NATURE, WITHOUT SUPPLYING THE SUBSTITUTE.

I dare say the interpreter and I sat an hour under that tree, conversing in low voices, on such matters and things as came uppermost in our minds. There was a good deal of true prerie philosophy in the opinions of my companion, which is much as if one should say his notions were a mixture of clear natural justice and strong local prejudices. The last sentiment he uttered

was so very characteristic as to merit particular notice.

"I'll tell you how it is, Colonel," he said, "right is right, and nonsense is nonsense. If so be, we should happen to catch one of these mocking rascals firing your house or barn, it would be a smart chance at justice to settle things on the spot. If I had *my* way, I should just tie the fellow, hands and feet, and toss him into the flames to help him along with his own work. A rascal makes the best of kindling-wood!"

Just at that instant I saw an upper leaf of the inside shutter of Mary Warren's room open, for my eye was resting on the window at that very moment. The light had been brought so near the opening as plainly to show the change, leaving no doubt that my fair sentinel within had made some important discovery. At such a summons I could not hesitate; but, telling Manytongues to continue his watchfulness, I went across the lawn with the steps of youth and haste. In two minutes my hand was on the latch of the little door; and, in two seconds more, it was open, and I found myself standing in front of Mary Warren. A gesture from her

hand induced me to be cautious, and closing the door silently, I asked an explanation.

"Speak not too loud," whispered the anxious girl, preserving a wonderful self-command, nevertheless, for the extraordinary circumstances in which she was placed. "I have discovered them; they are here!"

"Here!—not in the house, surely?"

"In the house itself!—in the kitchen, where they are kindling a fire on the floor at this instant. Come quickly;—there is not a moment to lose."

It may be well to explain here the arrangement of the kitchens and offices, in order to render what is to follow the more intelligible. The gateway mentioned cut the southern wing of the house into two equal parts, the chambers, however, extending the whole length, and of course passing over it. On the western side of this gateway were certain offices connected with the eating-rooms, and those eating-rooms themselves. On the eastern side were the kitchen, servants' hall, scullery, &c., and a flight of narrow stairs that led to the chambers occupied by the domestics. The outside door to this latter portion of the building was beneath the arch of the gateway, one corresponding to it opening

on its opposite side, and by means of which the service was ordinarily made. There was a court, environed on three of its sides by the main edifice, and by the two long, low wings that have been so often mentioned, while it was open on the fourth to the cliff. This cliff was low, and, while it was nearly perpendicular, it was possible for an active man to ascend, or even to descend it, by clinging to the rocks, which were sufficiently ragged to admit of such an adventure. When a boy I had done both fifty times, and it was a somewhat common experiment among the male domestics and hirelings of the household. It occurred to me at once that the incendiaries had most probably entered the house by ascending the cliff, the kitchen of itself furnishing all the materials to light a conflagration.

The reader will be assured that, after receiving the startling communication of Mary Warren, I did not stop to discuss all these matters with her. My first impulse was to desire her to run to the beech, and bid Many-tongues join me, but she refused to quit my side.

"No—no—no. You must not go to the kitchen alone," she said, hurriedly. "There are *two* of them, and desperate looking wretches

are they, with their faces blackened, and they have muskets. No—no—no. Come, *I* will accompany you."

I hesitated no longer, but moved forward, Mary keeping close at my side. Fortunately, I had brought the rifle with me, and the revolving pistol was in my pocket. We went by the eating-rooms and offices, the course taken by Mary herself on her watch; and who, in looking through a small window of one of the last, that opened beneath the gateway, had discovered what was going on, by means of a similar window in the kitchen. As we went, the noble girl told me that she had kept moving through the lower rooms of the whole house during the time I had been on watch out of doors, and, attracted by the light that gleamed through these windows, she had distinctly seen two men, with blackened faces, kindling a fire in a corner of the kitchen, where the flames must soon communicate with the stairs, by means of which they would speedily reach the attics and the wood-work of the roof. Fortunately, the floors of all that part of the house were made of bricks; that of the servants' hall excepted, which was a room beyond the narrow passage that contained the stairs. As soon as apprised of the danger,

Mary Warren had flown to the window of her own room, to make the signal to me, and then to the door to meet me. But three or four minutes had elapsed between the time when she became apprised of the danger, and that when we were walking hurriedly to the window beneath the gateway.

A bright light, which shone through the opposite window, announced the progress made by the incendiaries. Requesting Mary to remain where she was, I passed through the door, and descended to the pavement of the gateway. The little window beneath the arch was too high for my purposes, when on that level, but there was a row of low windows that opened on the court. To one of these I moved swiftly, and got a clear view of all that was passing within.

"There they are!" exclaimed Mary, who, neglectful of my request, still kept close at my side. "Two men with blackened faces, and the wood of which they have made their fire is blazing brightly."

The fire, now I saw it, did not confirm the dread I felt when I had it before me only in imagination. The stairway had an open plaze beneath it, and on the brick floor below had the

incendiaries built their pile. It was constructed, at the bottom, of some of the common wood that was found there, in readiness for the wants of the cook in the morning, lighted by coals taken from the fire-place. A considerable pile had been made with the wood, which was now burning pretty freely, and the two rascals were busy piling on the chairs when I first saw them. They had made a good beginning, and in ten or fifteen minutes longer there is no doubt that all that portion of the house would have been in flames.

"You said they had muskets," I whispered to Mary. "Do you see them now?"

"No: when I saw them, each held his musket in one hand, and worked with the other."

I could have shot the villains without difficulty or risk to myself, but felt deeply averse to taking human life. Still, there was the prospect of a serious struggle before me, and I saw the necessity of obtaining assistance.

"Will you go to my uncle's room, Mary, and tell him to rise immediately. Then to the front door of the house, and call out, 'Manytongues, come here as fast as possible.' It will take but two minutes to do both, and I will watch these rascals in the mean time."

"I dread leaving you here alone with the wretches, Mr. Littlepage," whispered Mary, gently.

An earnest entreaty on my part, however, induced her to comply; and no sooner did the dear girl set about the accomplishment of the task, than she flew, rather than ran. It did not seem to me a minute ere I heard her call to the interpreter. The night was so still, that, sweet as were those tones, and busy as were the incendiaries, they heard them too; or fancied they heard something which alarmed them. They spoke to each other, looked intently at their infernal work for a single instant, sought their arms, which were standing in the corner of the kitchen, and were evidently preparing to depart.

The crisis was near. There was not time to receive assistance before the two fellows would be out, and I must either meet them in conflict, or suffer them to escape. My first impression was to shoot down the leading man, and grapple with the other ere he had time to prepare his arms. But a timely thought prevented this hazardous step. The incendiaries were retiring, and I had a doubt of the legality of killing a retreating felon. I believed that *my* chances

before a jury would be far less than those of an ordinary pickpocket or highway robber, and had heard and read enough to be certain there were thousands around me who would fancy it a sufficient moral provocation for all which had passed, that I held the fee of farms that other men desired to possess.

A majority of my countrymen will scout the idea as forced and improbable. But majorities are far from being infallible in their judgments. Let any discreet and observant man take a near view of that which is daily going on around him. If he do not find in men this disposition to distort principles, to pervert justice, and to attain their ends regardless of the means, then will I admit I do not understand human nature, as human nature exhibits its deformity in this blessed republic of ours.

There was no time to lose, however; and the course I actually decided to take will be soonest told by relating things as they occurred. I heard the door open, and was ready for action. Whether the incendiaries intended to retreat by the cliff, or to open the gate, which was barred within, I could not tell; but I was ready for either alternative.

No sooner did I hear a step on the pavement

of the gateway than I discharged my rifle in the air. This was done as an alarm-signal. Clubbing the piece, I sprang forward, and felled the foremost of the two, with a sharp blow on his hat. The fellow came down on the pavement like an ox under the axe of the slaughter-house. Dropping the rifle, I bounded over his body, and grappled with his companion. All this was done so rapidly as to take the rascals completely by surprise. So sudden, indeed, was my assault on the fellow who stood erect, that he was under the necessity of dropping his rifle, and at it we went, clenched like bears in the death-hug. I was young and active, but my antagonist was the stronger man of the two. He had also the advantage of being practised in wrestling, and I soon went down, my enemy falling on top of me. Luckily, I fell on the body of the other incendiary, who was just beginning to discover signs of consciousness after the crushing blow he had received. My chance would now have been small but for assistance. The incendiary had caught my neck-handkerchief, and was twisting it to choke me, when I felt a sudden relief. The light of the fire shone through the kitchen doors, rendering every thing distinct beneath the arch.

Mary came flying back just in time to rescue me. With a resolution that did her honour, she caught up the rifle I had dropped, and passed its small end between the bent arms of my antagonist and his own back, raising it at the same time like a lever. In the brief interval of breathing this ready expedient gave me, I rallied my force, caught my enemy by the throat, made a desperate effort, threw him off, and over on his side, and was on my feet in an instant. Drawing the pistol, I ordered the rascal to yield, or to take the consequences. The sight of this weapon secured the victory, the black-faced villain shrinking back into a corner, begging piteously not to be shot. At the next moment the interpreter appeared under the arch, followed by a stream of redskins, which had been turned in this direction by the alarm given by my rifle.

CHAPTER III.

"Ye say they all have passed away,
That noble race and brave;
That their light canoes have vanish'd
From off the crested wave;
That 'mid the forests where they roam'd
There rings no hunter's shout;
But their name is on your waters,
Ye may not wash it out."

MRS. SIGOURNEY.

DIRECTING Manytongues to secure the two incendiaries, I sprang into the kitchen to extinguish the flames. It was high time, though Mary Warren had already anticipated me here, too. She had actually thrown several dippers of water upon the fire, which was beginning to crackle through the pile of chairs, and had already succeeded in lessening the flames. I knew that a hydrant stood in the kitchen itself, which gave a full stream of water. Filling a pail, I threw the contents on the flames; and

repeating the application, in half a minute the room was filled with vapour, and to the bright light succeeded a darkness that was so deep as to suggest the necessity of finding lamps and candles.

The tumult produced by the scene just described soon brought all in the house to the spot. The domestics, male and female, came tumbling down the stairs, under which the fire had been lighted, and presently candles were seen glancing about the house, in all directions.

"I declare, Mr. Hugh," cried John, the moment he had taken a survey of the state of the kitchen, "this is worse than Hireland, sir! The Hamericans affect to laugh at the poor Hirish, and calls their country savage, and hunfit to be in'abited, but nothing worse passes in it than is beginning to pass 'ere. Them stairs would have been all in flames in a few minutes, and them stairs once on fire, not one of hus, up in the hattics, could 'ave escaped death! Don't talk of Hireland, after this!"

Poor John! his prejudices are those of an Englishman of his class, and that is saying as much in favour of their strength as *can* be well said of any prejudices. But, how much truth was there in his remark! The quiet manner in

which we assume superiority, in morals, order, justice and virtue, over all other nations, really contains an instructive lesson, if one will only regard things as they really are. I have no wish to exaggerate the faults of my own country, but certainly I shall not remorselessly conceal them, when the most dangerous consequences are connected with such a mistake. As a whole, the disorders, disturbances, and convulsions of America have certainly been much fewer than those of most, perhaps of all other Christian nations, comparing numbers, and including the time since the great experiment commenced. But, such *ought* to have been the result of our facts, quite independently of national character. The institutions leave nothing for the masses to struggle for, and famine is unknown among us. But what does the other side of the picture exhibit? Can any man point to a country in Europe in which a great political movement has commenced on a principle as barefacedly knavish as that of transferring property from one class of men to another? That such a project does exist here, is beyond all just contradiction; and it is equally certain that it has carried its devices into legislation, and is fast corrupting the government in its most efficient

agents. John was right in saying we ought not to turn up our noses at the ebullitions of abused and trodden-on "Hireland," while our own skirts are to be cleared of such sins against the plainest dictates of right.

The fire was extinguished, and the house was safe. The kitchen was soon cleared of the steam and smoke, and in their places appeared a cloud of redskins. Prairiefire, Eaglesflight, and Flintyheart, were all there, examining the effects of the fire, with stern and interested countenances. I looked round for Mary Warren; but that gentle and singularly feminine girl, after manifesting a presence of mind and decision that would have done honour to a young man of her own age, had shrunk back with sensitive consciousness, and now concealed herself among the others of her sex. Her duty, so eminently useful and protective, had been performed, and she was only anxious to have it all forgotten. This I discovered only next day, however.

Manytongues had secured the incendiaries, and they were now in the kitchen also, with their hands tied together, and arms bound behind their backs, at the elbows. As their faces remained black, it was out of my power

to recognise either. The rascal who had been felled by the blow of the rifle was yet confused in manner, and I ordered the domestics to wash him, in the double expectation of bringing him more completely to his senses, and of ascertaining who he might be.

The work was soon done, and both objects were attained. The cook used a dishcloth with so much dexterity, that the black-a-moor came out a white man, at the first application, and he was soon as clean as a child that is about to be sent to school, fresh from the hands of its nurse. The removal of the disguise brought out the abashed and frightened physiognomy of Joshua Brigham, Miller's hired man—or *my* hired man, in effect, as I paid him his wages.

Yes! such was one of the effects of the pernicious opinions that had been so widely circulated in the land, during the profound moral mania that was working its ravages among us, with a fatality and danger that greatly exceed those which accompanied the cholera. A fellow, who was almost an inmate of my family, had not only conspired with others to rob me of my property, on a large scale, but he had actually carried his plot so far as to resort to the brand and the rifle, as

two of the agents to be employed in carrying out his virtuous objects. Nor was this the result of the vulgar disposition to steal; it was purely a consequence of a widely-extended system, that is fast becoming incorporated with the politics of the land, and which men, relying on the efficacy of majorities, are bold enough to stand up, in legislative halls, to defend.*

* In order that the reader who is not familiar with what is passing in New York may not suppose that exaggerated terms are here used, the writer will state a single expedient of the anti-renters in the legislature to obtain their ends. It is generally known that the Constitution of the United States prevents the separate States from passing laws impairing the obligations of contracts. But for this provision of the Federal Constitution, it is probable, numbers would have succeeded, long ago, in obtaining the property of the few on their own terms, amid shouts in honour of liberty! This provision, however, has proved a stubborn obstacle, until the world, near the middle of the nineteenth century, has been favoured with the following notable scheme to effect the ends of those who "want farms and must have them." The State *can* regulate, by statute, the law of descents. It has accordingly been solemnly proposed in the legislature of New York, that the statute of descents should be so far altered, that when a landlord, holding lands subject to certain leasehold tenures, dies, or a descent is cast, that it shall be lawful for the tenants, on application to the chancellor, to convert these leasehold tenures into mortgages, and to obtain the fee-simple of the estates in payment of the debt! In other words, A. leases a farm to B. for ever, reserving a ground-rent, with covenants of re-entry, &c. &c. B. wishes a deed, but will not pay A.'s price. The United States says the contract shall not be impaired, and the

I confess that the discovery of the person of Joshua Brigham rendered me a little curious to ascertain that of his companion. Hester, the cook, was directed to take the other child in hand, as soon as she had well wiped the countenance of the one first unmasked. Nothing loth, the good housewife set about her task, and the first dab of water she applied revealed the astounding fact that I had again captured Seneca Newcome! It will be remembered, that the last time I saw these two men together, I left them fighting in the highway.

I admit that this discovery shocked me. There never had been a being of the Newcome tribe, from the grandfather, who was its root at Ravensnest, down to Opportunity, who had ever been esteemed, or respected among us. Trick—trick—trick—low cunning, and over-reaching management, had been the family trait, from the day Jason, of that name, had rented the mill lot, down to the present hour. This I

Legislature of New York is illustrated by the expedient we have named, to get over the provision of the Constitution!

Since writing the foregoing, this law has actually passed the Assembly, though it has not been adopted by the Senate. The provision included all leased property, when the leases were for more than twenty-one years, or were on lives.—EDITOR.

had heard from my grandfather, my grandmother, my own father, my uncle, my aunts and all, older than myself, who belonged to me. Still, *there* they had been, and habit had created a sort of feeling for them. There had, also, been a species of pretension about the family, which brought them more before us, than most of the families of the tenantry. The grandfather had received a sort of an education, and this practice had been continued, after a manner, down to the unfortunate wretch who now stood a prisoner taken *flagrante delictu*, and for a capital crime. Seneca could never have made a gentleman, as the term is understood among gentlemen; but he belonged to a profession which ought to raise a man materially above the level of the vulgar. Opportunity, too, had received her *quasi* education, a far more pretending one than that of my own Patt, but nothing had been well taught to her; not even reading, inasmuch as she had a decided provincial pronunciation, which sometimes grated on my nerves. But, Opportunity had feelings, and could not have anticipated her own brother's intentions, when she communicated the important information she had. Opportunity, moreover, had more refinement than Seneca, in

consequence of having a more limited association, and she might fall into despair, at this unexpected result of her own acts!

I was still reflecting on these things, when summoned to my grandmother. She was in her own dressing-room, surrounded by the four girls; just so many pictures of alarm, interest, and female loveliness. Mary Warren alone, was in regular *toilette;* but the others, with instinctive coquetry, had contrived to wrap themselves up, in a way to render them handsomer than ever. As for my dear grandmother herself, she had been told that the house was safe, but felt that vague desire to see me, that was perhaps natural to the circumstances.

"The state of the country is frightful," she said, when I had answered a few of her questions, and had told her who the prisoners really were; "and we can hardly remain here, in safety. Think of one of the Newcomes—and of Seneca, in particular, with his profession and education, being engaged in such a crime!"

"Nay, grandmother," put in Patt, a little archly, "I never yet heard you speak well of the Newcomes; you barely tolerated Opportunity, in the hope of improving her."

"It is true, that the race is a bad one, and

the circumstances show what injury a set of false notions, transmitted from father to son, for generations, may do in a family. We cannot think of keeping these dear girls, here, one hour after to-morrow, Hugh. To-morrow, or to-day, for it is now past two o'clock, I see;—to-day is Sunday, and we can go to church; to-night we will be watchful, and Monday morning your uncle shall start for Satanstoe, with all three of the girls."

"I shall not leave my dear grandmother," rejoined Patt—"nor do I think it would be very kind to leave Mary Warren behind us, in a place like this."

"I cannot quit my father," said Mary, herself, quietly, but very firmly. "It is his duty to remain with his parishioners, and more so, now, that so many of them are misguided, than at any other time; and it is always my duty, and my pleasure, to remain with *him*."

Was that acting? Was that Pharisaical? Or was it genuine nature; pure filial affection and filial piety? Beyond all question, it was the last; and had not the simple tone, the earnest manner, and the almost alarmed eagerness, with which the dear girl spoke, proclaimed

as much, no one could have looked in at that serene and guileless eye and doubted. My grandmother smiled on the lovely earnest speaker, in her kindest manner, took her hand, and charmingly observed—

"Mary and I will remain together. Her father is in no danger, for even anti-renters will respect a minister of the gospel, and can be made to understand it is his duty to rebuke even their sins. As for the other girls, I think it is our duty to insist that your uncle's wards, at least, should no longer be exposed to dangers like those we have gone through to-night."

The two young ladies, however, protested in the prettiest manner possible, their determination not to quit "grandmamma," as they affectionately termed their guardian's mother; and while they were thus employed, my uncle Ro entered the room, having just paid a visit to the kitchen.

"Here's a charming affair!" exclaimed the old bachelor, as soon as in our midst. "Arson, anti-rentism, attempts at murder, and all sorts of enormities, going hand in hand, in the very heart of the wisest and best community that earth ever knew; and the laws as profoundly

asleep the whole time, as if such gentle acts were considered meritorious. This out-does repudiation twenty-fold, Hugh."

"Ay, my dear sir, but it will not make a tithe of the talk. Look at the newspapers that will be put into your hands to-morrow morning, fresh from Wall and Pine and Anne streets. They will be in convulsions, if some unfortunate wight of a senator speak of adding an extra corporal to a regiment of foot, as an alarming war-demonstration, or quote the fall of a fancy stock that has not one cent of intrinsic value, as if it betokened the downfal of a nation; while they doze over this volcano, which is raging and gathering strength beneath the whole community, menacing destruction to the nation itself, which is the father of stocks."

"The intense selfishness that is uppermost is a bad symptom, certainly; and no one can say to what it will lead. One thing is sure; it causes men to limit all their calculations to the present moment; and to abate a nuisance that presses on our existing interests, they will jeopard everything that belongs to the future. But what are we to do with Seneca Newcome, and his co-rascal, the other incendiary?"

"I had thought of referring that to your discretion, sir. They have been guilty of arson, I suppose, and must take their chances, like every-day criminals."

"Their chances will be very good ones, Hugh. Had *you* been caught in Seneca Newcome's kitchen, setting fire to his house, condign and merciless punishment would have been *your* lot, beyond all controversy; but *their* cases will be very different. I'll bet you a hundred that they'll not be convicted; and a thousand that they are pardoned, if convicted."

"Acquitted, sir, will be out of the question —Miss Warren and I saw them both, in the very act of building their fire; and there is plenty of testimony as to their identity."

This indiscreet speech drew every eye on my late companion; all the ladies, old and young, repeating the name of "Mary!" in the pretty manner in which the sex expresses surprise. As for Mary, herself, the poor blushing girl shrunk back abashed, ashamed of she knew not what, unless it might be in connexion with some secret consciousness, at finding herself so strangely associated with me.

"Miss Warren is, indeed, in her evening

dress," said my grandmother, a little gravely, "and cannot have been in bed this night. How has this happened, my dear?"

Thus called on, Mary Warren was of too guileless and pure a mind, to hesitate in telling her tale. Every incident, with which she had been connected, was simply and clearly related, though she suppressed the name of our midnight visitor, out of tenderness to Opportunity. All present were too discreet to ask the name, and, I may add, all present heard the narrative with a marked and approving interest. When Mary had done, my grandmother kissed her, and Patt, the generous creature, encircled her waist with the tenderness and affection of a sister, who felt for all the trials the other had endured.

"It seems, then, we owe our safety to Mary, after all!" exclaimed my good grandmother; "without her care and watchfulness, Hugh might, most probably *would*, have remained on the lawn, until it was too late to save the house, or us."

"That is not all," added uncle Ro. "Any one could have cried 'fire,' or given a *senseless* alarm, but it is evident from Miss Warren's account, unpremeditated and artless as it is,

that, but for the cool and discreet manner in which she played her part, not one-half of that which has been done, would have been effected, and that the house might have been lost. Nay, had these fellows surprised Hugh, instead of Hugh's surprising them, we might have been called on to deplore his loss."

I saw a common shudder in Patt and Mary, as they stood encircling each other with their arms; but the last was evidently so pained, that I interfered for her relief.

"I do not see any possibility of escape for these incendiaries," I said, turning to my uncle, "under the testimony that can be offered, and am surprised to hear you suggest a doubt of the result of the trial."

"You feel and reason like a very young man, Hugh; one who fancies things are much nearer what they ought to be than facts will sustain. Justice is blind, now-a-days, not as a proof of impartiality, but as a proof that she too often sees only one side of a question. How will they escape? Perhaps the jury may fancy setting fire to a pile of wood, and certain chairs, is not setting fire to a house, let the *animus* be as plain as the noses on their faces. Mark me, Hugh Littlepage; one month will not go by, before

the events of this very night will be tortured into an argument in favour of anti-rentism."

A common exclamation, in which even my grandmother joined, expressed the general dissent from this opinion.

"It is all very well, ladies," answered my uncle Ro, coolly,—"all well enough, Master Hugh; but let the issue tell its own story. I have heard already *other* abuses of the anti-renters urged as a reason why the laws should be changed, in order that men may not be tempted beyond their strength; and why not use the same reasoning in favour of this crime, when it has been used already, in cases of murder? 'The leasehold tenures make men commit murder,' it is said, 'and they ought to be destroyed,' themselves. 'The leasehold tenures make men commit arson,' it will now be said, 'and who desires to retain laws that induce men to commit arson?'".

"On the same principle it might be pretended there should be no such thing as personals, as they tempt men beyond what they can bear, to commit petty larceny."

"No doubt it could, and no doubt it *would*, if political supremacy were to be the reward. There is nothing—no fallacy, no moral sophism,

that would not be used to attain such an end. But, it is late, and we ought to bethink us of disposing of the prisoners for the night—what means this light? The house is not on fire, after all!"

Sure enough, notwithstanding the closed shutters and drawn curtains of my grandmother's dressing-room, an unusual light had penetrated to the place, filling us with sudden and intense alarm. I opened the door, and found the passages illuminated, though all within appeared tranquil and safe. There was a clamour in the court, however, and presently the fearful war-whoop of the savages rose on the night air. The cries came from without, as I fancied, and, rushing to the little door, I was on the lawn in a moment, when the mystery was solved. An extensive hay-barn, one well-filled with the remainder of the last year's crops, was on fire, sending its forked and waving tongues of flame at least a hundred feet into the air. It was merely a new argument against the leasehold tenures, and in favour of the "spirit of the institutions," a little vividly pressed on the human senses. Next year, it may figure in the message of a governor, or the philanthropical efforts of some Albany orator, if the same "spirit" prevail in

the "Institutions," as would seem to prevail this! Is a contract to be tolerated which induces freemen to set barns on fire?

The barn that had been set on fire stood on the flats, below the cliff, and fully half a mile from the Nest. The conflagration made a most brilliant blaze, and, as a matter of course, produced an intense light. The loss to myself did not exceed a few hundred dollars; and, while this particular argument in favour of anti-rentism was not entirely agreeable, it was not so grave as it might have been, had it been urged on other buildings, and in the same mode. In other words, I was not so much distressed with my loss as not to be able to see the beauty of the scene; particularly as my uncle Ro whispered that Dunning had caused an insurance to be effected in the Saratoga Mutual Assurance, which would probably place a considerable portion of the tenants in the unlooked-for category of those who were to pay for their own frolic.

As it was too late to think of saving the barn and ricks, and Miller, with his people, had already descended to the spot to look after the fences, and any other object that might be endangered by the flying embers, there was nothing for us to do but to remain passive spectators. Truly,

the scene was one worthy of being viewed, and is not altogether unfit for description.

The light of that burning barn extended for a great distance, shining like what it was, an "*evil* deed in a naughty world;" for, notwithstanding the high authority of Shakspeare, it it is your "evil deeds," after all, that produce the brightest blazes, and which throw their beams the farthest, in this state of probation in which we live.

The most remarkable objects in that remarkable scene were the true and the false redskins —the "Indians" and the "Injins,"—both of whom were in motion on the meadows, and both of whom were distinctly visible to us where we stood, on the cliffs (the ladies being at their chamber windows), though I dare say they were not quite so obvious to each other.

The Indians had formed themselves into a very open order, and were advancing towards the other party in a stealthy manner, by creeping on all-fours, or crouching like catamounts to the earth, and availing themselves of everything like a cover that offered. The burning barn was between the two parties, and was a principal reason that the "Injins" were not sooner aware of the risk they ran. The last were a

whooping, shouting, dancing, leaping band, of some forty or fifty of the "disguised and armed," who were quite near enough to the conflagration to enjoy it, without being so near as to be necessarily connected with it. We understood their presence and antics to be intended as so many intimations of the secret agency they had had in the depredations of the night, and as so many warnings how I withstood the "spirit of the Institutions."

Manytongues, who had certain vague notions of the necessity of his keeping on the windy side of the law, did not accompany his red brethren, but came through the gateway and joined my uncle and myself, as we stood beneath the cover of a noble chestnut, on the verge of the cliff, watching the course of things on the meadow. I expressed my surprise at seeing him there, and inquired if his presence might not be needed by Flintyheart or Prairiefire.

"Not at all, not at all, Colonel," he answered with perfect coolness. "The savages have no great need of an intarpreter in the business they are on; and if harm comes of the meetin', it's perhaps best that the two parties should not understand each other, in which case it might all be looked on as an accident. I hope

they'll not be particular about scalps,—for I told Flintyheart, as he was leaving us, the people of this part of the world did not like to be scalped."

This was the only encouragement we received from the interpreter, who appeared to think that matters were now in the right train, and that every difficulty would soon be disposed of, *secundum artem*. The Injins, however, viewed the affair differently, having no wish for a serious brush with any one; much less with enemies of the known character of redskins. How they ascertained the presence of their foe I cannot say, though it is probable some one saw them stealing along the meadows, in spite of all their care, and gave the alarm. Alarm it was, sure enough; the party of the previous day scarce retreating through the woods with greater haste than the "disguised and armed" now vanished.

Such has been the fact, as respects these men, in every instance in which they have been brought in contact with armed bodies, though much inferior to their own in numbers. Fierce enough, and even brutal, on a variety of occasions in which individuals have become subject to their power, in all cases in which armed

parties, however small, have been sent against them, they have betrayed timidity and a dread of making that very appeal to force, which, by their own previous acts, they had insolently invited. Is it then true, that these *soi-disant* "Injins" have not the ordinary courage of their race, and that they are less than Americans, with arms in their hands, and below the level of all around them in spirit? Such is not the case. The consciousness of guilt has made them cowards; they have found "that the king's name is a tower of strength," and have shrunk from conflicts, in which the secret warnings that come from on high have told them that they were embodied in a wicked cause, and contending for the attainment of wrong ends by unjustifiable means. Their conduct proves how easy it would have been to suppress their depredations at the earliest day, by a judicious application of the power of the State, and how much *they* have to answer for who have neglected their duty in this particular.

As soon as Flintyheart and his followers ascertained that the "disguised and armed" were actually off again, and that they were not to pass the morning in a skirmish, as no doubt each man among them had hoped would be

the case, they set up such whoops and cries as had not been heard on those meadows during the last eighty years. The period went beyond the memory of man since Indian warfare had existed at Ravensnest, a few false alarms in the revolution excepted. The effect of these yells was to hasten the retreat, as was quite apparent to us on the cliffs; but the sagacious warriors of the prairies knew too much to expose their persons by approaching nearer to the blazing barn than might be prudent. On the contrary, seemingly satisfied that nothing was to be done, and disdaining a parade of service where no service was to be effected, they slowly retired from the meadows, regaining the cliffs by means known to themselves.

This military demonstration, on the part of our red brethren, was not without its useful consequences. It gave the "Injins" an intimation of watchfulness, and of a readiness to meet them that prevented any new alarm that night, and satisfied everybody at the Nest that our immediate danger had come to an end. Not only was this the feeling of my uncle, and myself, but it was also the feeling of the females, as we found on returning to the house, who had witnessed all that had passed from the

upper windows. After a short interview with my grandmother, she consented to retire, and preparations were made for setting a look-out, and dismissing everybody to their beds again. Manytongues took charge of the watch, though he laughed at the probability of there being any further disturbance that night.

"As for the redskins," he said, "they would as soon sleep out under the trees, at this season of the year, as sleep under a roof; and as for waking—cats a'nt their equals. No—no—Colonel; leave it all to me, and I'll carry you through the night as quietly as if we were on the prer-ies, and living under good wholesome prer-ie law."

"As quietly, as if we were on the prairies!" We had then reached that pass in New York, that after one burning, a citizen might really hope to pass the remainder of his night as quietly as if he were on the prairies! And there was that frothy, lumbering, useless machine, called a government, at Albany, within fifty miles of us, as placid, as self-satisfied, as much convinced that this was the greatest people on earth, and itself their illustrious representatives, as if the disturbed counties were so many gardens of Eden, before sin and

transgression had become known to it! If it was doing anything in the premises, it was probably calculating the minimum the tenant should pay for the landlord's land, when the latter might be sufficiently worried to part with his estate. Perhaps, it was illustrating its notions of liberty, by naming the precise sum that one citizen ought to accept, in order that the covetous longings of another should be satisfied!

I was about to retire to my bed, for the first time that night, when my uncle Ro remarked it might be well to see one of our prisoners at least. Orders had been given to unbind the wretched men, and to keep them in an empty store-room, which had no available outlet but the door. Thither we then repaired, and of course were admitted by the sentinels, without a question. Seneca Newcome was startled at my appearance, and I confess I was myself embarrassed how to address him, from a wish to say nothing that might appear like exultation on one side, or concession on the other. My uncle, however, had no such scruples, probably from better knowing his man; accordingly, he came to the point at once.

"The evil spirit must have got great ascen-

dency in the country, Seneca Newcome, when men of your knowledge dip so deeply into his designs," said Mr. Littlepage, sternly. "What has my nephew ever done to incite *you* to come into his house, as an incendiary, like a thief in the night?"

"Ask me no questions, Mr. Littlepage," surlily replied the attorney, "for I shall answer none."

"And this miserable misguided creature who has been your companion. The last we saw of these two men, Hugh, they were quarrelling in the highway, like cat and dog, and there are signs about their faces that the interview became still more hostile than it had been, after we left them."

"And here we find them together, companions in an enterprise of life and death!"

"It is ever thus with rogues. They will push their quarrels to extremities, and make them up in an hour, when the demon of rapine points to an object for common plunder. You see the same spirit in politics, ay, and even in religion. Men that have lived in hostility, for half their lives, contending for selfish objects, will suddenly combine their powers to attain a common end, and work together like the most

true-hearted friends, so long as they see a chance of effecting their wishes. If honesty were only one-half as active as roguery, it would fare better than it does. But the honest man has his scruples; his self-respect; his consistency, and most of all his principles, to mark out his course, and he cannot turn aside at each new impulse, like your pure knave, to convert enemies into friends, and friends into enemies. And you," turning to Josh Brigham, who was looking surlily on—"who have actually been eating Hugh Littlepage's bread, what has he done, that you should come at midnight, to burn him up like a caterpillar in the spring?"

"He has had his farm long enough"—muttered the fellow—"it's time that poor folks had some chance."

My uncle shrugged his shoulders; then, as if he suddenly recollected himself, he lifted his hat, bowed like a thorough-bred gentleman as he was, when he chose to be, wished Seneca good night, and walked away. As we retired, he expressed his conviction of the uselessness of remonstrance, in this case, and of the necessity of suffering the law to take its own course. It might be unpleasant to see a Newcome actually hanged, but nothing short of that operation, he

felt persuaded would ever fetch up the breed in its evil courses. Wearied with all that had passed, I now went to bed, and slept soundly for the succeeding seven hours. As the house was kept quiet by orders, everybody repaired the lost time, the Nest being as quiet as in those days in which the law ruled in the republic.

CHAPTER IV.

"Well may we sing her beauties,
This pleasant land of ours,
Her sunny smiles, her golden fruits,
And all her world of flowers.
And well would they persuade us now,
In moments all too dear,
That, sinful though our hearts may be,
We have our Eden here."

SIMMS.

THE following day was Sunday. I did not rise until nine, and when I withdrew the curtains and opened the shutters of my window, and looked out upon the lawn, and the fields beyond it, and the blue void that canopied all, I thought a lovelier day, or one more in harmony with the tranquil character of the whole scene, never shone from the heavens. I threw up the sash, and breathed the morning air which filled my dressing-room, pregnant with the balms and odours of the hundred sweet-smelling flowers

and plants that embellished the shrubberies. The repose of the sabbath seemed to rest on man and beast; the bees and humming-birds that buzzed about the flowers, even at their usual pursuits seemed as if conscious of the sanctity of the day. I think no one can be insensible to the difference there is between a sabbath in the country and any other day of the week. Most of this, doubtless, is the simple consequence of abstaining from labour; but, connected with the history of the festival, its usual observances, and the holy calm that appears to reign around, it is so very obvious and impressive, that a Sunday, in a mild day in June, is to me ever a delicious resting-place, as a mere poetical pause in the bustling and turmoil of this world's time. Such a day was that which succeeded the night through which we had just passed, and it came most opportunely to soothe the spirits, tranquillize the apprehensions, and afford a moment for sober reflection.

There lay the smouldering ruins of the barn, it is true; a blackened monument of a wicked deed; but the mood which had produced this waste and wrong appeared to have passed away; and, in all other respects, far and near,

the farms of Ravensnest had never spread themselves before the eye in colours more in consonance with the general benevolence of a bountiful nature. For a moment, as I gazed on the broad view, I felt all my earlier interests in it revive, and am not ashamed to own that a profound feeling of gratitude to God came over me when I recollected it was by his Providence I was born the heir to such a scene, instead of having my lot cast among the serfs and dependants of other regions.

After standing at the window a minute, in contemplation of that pleasing view, I drew back, suddenly and painfully conscious of the character and extent of the combination that existed to rob me of my rights in it. America no longer seemed America to my eyes; but, in place of its ancient submission to the law, its quick distinction between right and wrong, its sober and discriminating liberty, which equally avoided submission to the injustice of power, and the excesses of popular delusion, there had been substituted the rapacity of the plunderer, rendered formidable by the insidious manner in which it was interwoven with political machinery, and the truckling of the wretches entrusted with authority; men who were play-

ing into the hands of demagogues, solely in order to secure majorities to perpetuate their own influence. Was, then, the State really so corrupt as to lend itself to projects as base as those openly maintained by the anti-renters? Far from it: four men out of five, if not a larger proportion, must be, and indeed are, sensible of the ills that their success would entail on the community, and would lift up heart and hand to-morrow to put them down totally and without pity; but they have made themselves slaves of the lamp; have enlisted in the ranks of *party*, and *dare* not oppose their leaders, who wield them as Napoleon wielded his masses, to further private views, apostrophizing and affecting an homage to liberty all the while! Such is the history of man!

When the family met in the breakfast-room, a singular tranquillity prevailed among us. As for my grandmother, I knew her spirit and early experience, and was not so much surprised to find her calm and reasonable; but these qualities seemed imparted to her four young companions also. Patt could laugh, and yield to her buoyant spirits, just the same as if nothing had occurred, while my uncle's other wards maintained a lady-like quiet, that denoted

anything but apprehension. Mary Warren, however, surprised me by her air and deportment. There she sat, in her place at the table, looking, if possible, the most feminine, gentle, and timid of the four. I could scarcely believe that the blushing, retiring, modest, pretty daughter of the rector could be the prompt, decided, and clear-headed young girl who had been of so much service to me the past night, and to whose coolness and discretion, indeed, we were all indebted for the roof that was over our heads, and some of us, most probably, for our lives.

Notwithstanding this air of tranquillity, the breakfast was a silent and thoughtful meal. Most of the conversation was between my uncle and grandmother, and a portion of it related to the disposal of the prisoners. There was no magistrate within several miles of the Nest, but those who were tainted with anti-rentism; and to carry Seneca and his companion before a justice of the peace of this character, would be, in effect, to let them go at large. Nominal bail would be taken, and it is more than probable the constable employed would have suffered a rescue, did they even deem it necessary to go through this parade of

performing their duties. My uncle, consequently, adopted the following plan. He had caused the two incendiaries to be transferred to the old farm-house, which happened to contain a perfectly dry and empty cellar, and which had much of the security of a dungeon, without the usual defects of obscurity and dampness. The red-men had assumed the office of sentinels, one having his station at the door, while another watched near a window which admitted the light, while it was scarcely large enough to permit the human body to squeeze through it. The interpreter had received instructions from the agent to respect the Christian sabbath; and no movement being contemplated for the day, this little duty just suited their lounging, idle habits, when in a state of rest. Food and water, of course, had not been forgotten; and there my uncle Ro had left that portion of the business, intending to have the delinquents carried to a distant magistrate, one of the judges of the county, early on Monday morning. As for the disturbers of the past night, no signs of them were any longer visible, and there being little extensive cover near the Nest, no apprehension was felt of any surprise.

We were still at breakfast, when the tone of

St. Andrew's bell came floating, plaintively, through the air, as a summons to prepare ourselves for the services of the day. It was little more than a mile to the church, and the younger ladies expressed a desire to walk. My grandmother, attended by her son, therefore, alone used the carriage, while we young people went off in a body, on foot, half an hour before the ringing of the second bell. Considering the state of the country, and the history of the past night, I was astonished at my own indifference on this occasion, no less than at that of my charming companions; nor was it long before I gave utterance to the feeling.

"This America of ours is a queer place, it must be admitted," I cried, as we crossed the lawn to take a foot-path that would lead us, by pleasant pastures, quite to the church-door, without entering the highway, except to cross it once; "here we have the whole neighbourhood as tranquil as if crime never disturbed it, though it is not yet a dozen hours since riot, arson, and perhaps murder, were in the contemplation of hundreds of those who live on every side of us. The change is wonderful!"

"But, you will remember it is Sunday, Hugh," put in Patt. "All summer, when

Sunday has come, we have had a respite from disturbances and fears. In this part of the country, the people are too religious to think of desecrating the sabbath by violence and armed bands. The anti-renters would lose more than they would gain by pursuing a different course."

I had little or no difficulty in believing this, it being no unusual thing, among us, to find observances of this nature clinging to the habits of thousands, long after the devout feeling which had first instilled it into the race has become extinct. Something very like it prevails in other countries, and among even higher and more intellectual classes, where it is no unusual thing to find the most profound outward respect manifested towards the altar and its rites, by men who live in the hourly neglect of the first and plainest commands of the decalogue. We are not alone, therefore, in this pharisaical spirit, which exists, in some mode or other, wherever man himself is to be found.

But, this equivocal piety was certainly manifested to a striking degree, that day, at Ravensnest. The very men who were almost desperate in their covetous longings appeared at church, and went through the service with

as much seeming devotion as if conscious of no evil; and a general truce appeared to prevail in the country, notwithstanding there must have been much bitterness of feeling among the discomfited. Nevertheless, I could detect in the countenances of many of the old tenants of the family, an altered expression, and a coldness of the eye, which bespoke anything but the ancient friendly feeling which had so long existed between us. The solution was very simple; demagogues had stirred up the spirit—not of the Institutions, but—of covetousness in their breasts; and so long as that evil tendency predominated, there was little room for better feelings.

"Now, I shall have another look at the canopied pew," I cried, as we entered the last field, on our way to the church. "That offensive, but unoffending, object had almost gone out of my mind's eye, until my uncle recollected it, by intimating that Jack Dunning, as he calls his friend and council, had written him it *must* come down."

"I agree with Mr. Dunning altogether," answered Martha, quickly. "I wish with all my heart, Hugh, you would order that hideous-looking thing to be taken away this very week."

"Why this earnestness, my dear Patt? There has the hideous thing been ever since the church was built, which is now these three-score years, and no harm has come of it, as I know."

"It is harm to be so ugly. It disfigures the church; and then I do not think distinctions of that sort are proper for the house of God. I know this ever has been my grandmother's opinion; but finding her father-in-law and husband desirous of such an *ornament*, she consented in silence, during their lives."

"What do *you* say to all this, Miss Warren?" I asked, turning to my companion, for by some secret influence I was walking at her side. "Are you 'up canopy' or 'down canopy'?"

"'Down canopy,'" answered Mary, firmly. "I am of Mrs. Littlepage's opinion, that churches ought to contain as little as possible to mark worldly distinctions. Such distinctions are inseparable from life, I know; but it is to prepare for death that we enter such buildings."

"And your father, Miss Warren—have you ever heard him speak of my unfortunate pew?"

Mary hesitated an instant, changed colour, then looked up into my face with a countenance so ingenuous and lovely, that I would have

forgiven her even a severe comment on some act of folly of my own.

"My father is an advocate for doing away with pews altogether," she answered, "and, of course, can have no particular wish to preserve yours. He tells me, that in the churches of the Romanists, the congregation sit, stand, or kneel, promiscuously before the altar, or crowd around the pulpit, without any distinctions of rank or persons. Surely, that is better than bringing into the very temple the most pitiful of all worldly classifications, that of mere money."

"It *is* better, Miss Warren; and I wish, with all my heart, the custom could be adopted here. But the church that might best dispense with the support obtained from pews, and which, by its size and architecture, is best fitted to set the example of a new mode, has gone on in the old way, I understand, and has its pews as well as another."

"Do we get our custom from England, Hugh?" demanded Martha.

"Assuredly; as we do most others, good, bad and indifferent. The property-notion would be very likely to prevail in a country like England; and then it is not absolutely true that everybody

sits in common, even in the churches of the continent of the old world. The Seigneur, under the old régime, in France, had *his* pew, usually; and high dignitaries of the State in no country are found mingling with the mass of worshippers, unless it be in good company. It is true, a duchesse will kneel in the crowd, in most Romish churches, in the towns, for there are too many such persons to accommodate all with privileged seats, and such honours are reserved for the very great; but, in the country, there are commonly pews, in by-places, for the great personages of the neighbourhood. We are not quite so bad as we fancy ourselves, in this particular, though we might be better."

"But, you will allow that a canopied pew is unsuited to this country, brother?"

"Not more to this, than to any other. I agree that it is unsuited to all places of worship, where the petty differences between men, which are created by their own usages, should sink into insignificance, in the direct presence, as it might be, of the power of God. But, in this country, I find a spirit rising, which some persons would call the 'spirit of the Institutions,' that is for ever denying men rewards, and honours, and credit exactly in the degree in

which they deserve them. The moment a citizen's head is seen above the crowd of faces around him, it becomes the mark of rotten eggs, as if he were raised in the pillory, and his fellow-creatures would not tolerate any difference in moral stature."

"How do you reconcile that with the great number of Catos, and Brutuses, not to say of the Gracchi, that are to be found among us?" asked Mary Warren, slily.

"Oh! these are the mere creatures of party—great men for the nonce. They are used to serve the purposes of factions, and are be-greated for the occasion. Thus, it is, that nine-tenths of the Catos you mention, are forgotten, even by name, every political *lustrum*. But let a man rise, *independently of the people*, by his own merit, and see how the people will tolerate him. Thus it is with my pew—it is a *great* pew, and become great without any agency of the 'folks;' and the 'folks' don't like it."

The girls laughed at this sally, as light-hearted, happy girls will laugh at anything of the sort; and Patt put in her retort, in her own direct, spirited manner.

"It is a *great* ugly thing, if that concession will flatter your vanity," she said, "and I do

entreat it may come down *greatly*, this present week. Really, you can have no notion, Hugh, how much talk it has made of late."

"I do not doubt it, my dear. The talk is all aimed at the leases; everything that can be thought of, being dragged into the account against us poor landlords, in order to render our cause unpopular, and thus increase the chances of robbing us with impunity. *The good people of this State little imagine that the very evils that the enemies of the institutions have long predicted, and which their friends have as warmly repudiated, are now actively at work among us, and that the great experiment is in imminent danger of failing, at the very moment the people are loudly exulting in its success. Let this attempt on property succeed, ever so indirectly,* AND IT WILL BE FOLLOWED UP BY OTHERS, WHICH WILL AS INEVITABLY DRIVE US INTO DESPOTISM, AS A REFUGE AGAINST ANARCHY, AS EFFECT SUCCEEDS TO CAUSE. The danger exists, now, in its very worst form—that of political demagogueism—and must be met, face to face, and put down manfully, and on true principles, or, in my poor judgment, we are gone. Cant is a prevailing vice of the nation, more especially political and religious cant, and cant can never be appeased by concessions. My

canopy *shall* stand, so long as anti-rentism exists at Ravensnest, or be torn down by violence; when men return to their senses, and begin to see the just distinctions between *meum* and *tuum*, the cook may have it for oven-wood, any day in the week."

As we were now about to cross the stile that communicated with the highway, directly in front of the church, the conversation ceased, as unsuited to the place and the occasion. The congregation of St. Andrew's was small, as is usually the case with the country congregations of its sect, which are commonly regarded with distrust by the descendants of the Puritans in particular, and not unfrequently with strong aversion. The rowdy religion—half-cant, half-blasphemy—that Cromwell and his associates entailed on so many Englishmen, but which was not without a degree of ferocious, narrow-minded sincerity about it, after all, has probably been transmitted to this country, with more of its original peculiarities than exist, at the present day, in any other part of the world. Much of the narrow-mindedness remains; but, unhappily, when liberality does begin to show itself in these sects, it is apt to take the character of latitudinarianism. In a word, the

exaggerations and false principles that were so common among the religious fanatics of the American colonies in the seventeenth century, which burned witches, hanged Quakers, and denounced all but the elect few, are now running their natural race, with the goal of infidelity in open view before them. Thus will it be, also, with the abuses of political liberty, which must as certainly terminate in despotism, unless checked in season; such being, not the "*spirit* of the Institutions," but the tendency of human nature, as connected with everything in which the right is abandoned to sustain the wrong.

Mr. Warren, I found, was a popular preacher, notwithstanding the disfavour with which his sect was generally regarded. A prejudiced and provincial people was naturally disposed to look at everything that differed from their own opinions and habits with dislike; and the simple circumstance that he belonged to a church that possessed bishops, was of itself tortured into a proof that his sect favoured aristocracy and privileged classes. It is true that nearly every other sect in the country had orders in the church, under the names of ministers, elders, and deacons, and was just as liable to the same criticism; but then they did not possess *bishops*,

and having that which we do not happen to have ourselves, usually constitutes the *gist* of an offence, in cases of this sort. Notwithstanding these obstacles to popularity, Mr. Warren commanded the respect of all around him; and, strange as it may seem, none the less because, of all the clergy in that vicinity, he alone had dared to rebuke the spirit of covetousness that was abroad, and which it suits the morals of some among us to style the "spirit of the Institutions;" a duty he had discharged on more than one occasion, with great distinctness and force, though temperately and under the full influence of a profound feeling of Christian charity. This conscientious course had given rise to menaces and anonymous letters, the usual recourse of the mean and cowardly; but it had also increased the weight of his character, and extorted the secret deference of many who would gladly have entertained a different feeling towards him, had it been in their power.

My grandmother and uncle were already seated in the canopied pew when we pedestrians entered the church. Mary Warren turned into another aisle, and proceeded to the pew reserved for the rector, accompanied by my sister, while the other two young ladies passed up to the

chancel, and took their customary places. I followed, and for the first time in my life was seated beneath the offensive canopy, vested with all the rights of ownership. By the term "canopy," however, the reader is not to imagine anything like festooned drapery—crimson colours and gilded laces; our ambition had never soared so high. The amount of the distinction between this pew and any other in the church was simply this: it was larger and more convenient than those around it, an advantage which any other might have equally enjoyed who saw fit to pay for it, as had been the case with us, and it was canopied with a heavy, clumsy, ill-shaped sort of a roof, that was a perfect caricature of the celebrated *baldachino* of St. Peter's, in Rome. The first of these advantages probably excited no particular envy, for it came within the common rule of the country, of "play and pay;" but as for the canopy, that was aristocratic, and was not to be tolerated. Like the leasehold tenure, it was opposed to the "spirit of the Institutions." It is true, it did no real harm, as an existing thing; it is true, it had a certain use, as a memorial of past opinions and customs; it is true, it was property, and could not be touched without interfering with its

76456

privileges; it is true, that every person who saw it secretly felt there was nothing, after all, so very inappropriate in such a pew's belonging to a Littlepage; and, most of all, it was true that they who sat in it never fancied for a moment that it made them any better or any worse than the rest of their fellow-creatures. There it was, however; and, next to the feudal character of a lease, it was the most offensive object then existing in Ravensnest. It may be questioned if the cross, which occupied the place that, according to provincial orthodoxy, a weathercock should have adorned, or Mr. Warren's surplice, was one-half as offensive.

When I raised my head, after the private devotions which are customary with us semi-papishes, on entering a place of worship, and looking around me, I found that the building was crowded nearly to overflowing. A second glance told me that nearly every eye was fastened on myself. At first, the canopy having been uppermost so lately in my mind, I fancied that the looks were directed at *that;* but I soon became satisfied that I, in my own unworthy person, was their object. I shall not stop to relate most of the idle and silly reports that had got abroad, in connexion with the manner

and reason of my disguised appearance in the hamlet, the preceding day, or in connexion with anything else, though one of those reports was so very characteristic, and so entirely peculiar to the subject in hand, that I cannot omit it. That report was simply a rumour that I had caused one of my own barns to be set on fire, the second night of my arrival, in order to throw the odium of the act on those "virtuous and hard-working husbandmen," who only maintained an illegal and armed body on foot, just to bully and worry me out of my property. Yes, there I sat; altogether unconscious of the honour done me; regarded by quite half that congregation as the respected and just-minded youth, who had devised and carried out precisely such a rascally scheme. Now, no one who has not had the opportunity to compare, can form any idea how much more potent and formidable is the American "folks say," than the vulgar reports of any other state of society. The French *on dit* is a poor, pitiful report, placed by the side of this vast lever, which, like that of Archimedes, only wants a stand for its fulcrum, to move the world. The American "folks say" has a certain omnipotence, so long as it lasts, which arises from, not the

spirit, but the *character* of the institutions, themselves. In a country in which the people rule, "folks" are resolved that their "say" shall not pass for nothing. So few doubt the justice of the popular decision, that holy writ, itself, has not, in practical effect, one-half the power that really belongs to one of these reports, so long as it suits the common mind to entertain it. Few dare resist it; fewer still call in question its accuracy; though, in sober truth, it is hardly ever right. It makes and unmakes reputation, for the time being *bien entendu;* it even makes and unmakes patriots themselves. In short, though never quite truth, and not often very much like the truth, paradoxical as it may appear, it *is* truth, and nothing but the truth, *pro hac vice.* Everybody knows, nevertheless, that there is no permanency to what "folks say" about anything; and that "folks" frequently, nay, almost invariably, "unsay" what has been said six months before; yet, all submit to the authority of its *dicta,* so long as "folks" choose to "say." The only exception to this rule, and it merely proves it, is in the case of political parties, when there are always two "folks say" which flatly contradict each other; and sometimes there are

half-a-dozen, no two of which are ever precisely alike!

There I sat, as I afterwards learned, "the observed of all observers," merely because it suited the purposes of those who wished to get away my estate to raise various reports to my prejudice,—not one of which, I am happy to have it in my power to say, was in any manner true. The first good look that I took at the congregation satisfied me that very much the larger part of it consisted of those who did not belong to St. Andrew's Church. Curiosity, or some worse feeling, had trebled the number of Mr. Warren's hearers that day,—or, it might be more correct to say, of my observers.

There was no other interruption to the services than that which was produced by the awkwardness of so many who were strangers to the ritual. The habitual respect paid to religious rites kept every one in order; and, in the midst of a feeling that was as malignant and selfish as well could exist under circumstances of so little provocation, I was safe from violence, and even from insult. As for myself, little was or could be known of my character and propensities at Ravensnest. School, college, and travelling, with winter residences in town, had made me a

sort of stranger in my own domain, and I was regarded through the covenants of my leases, rather than through any known facts. The same was true, though in a less degree, with my uncle, who had lived so much abroad as to be considered a sort of half foreigner, and one who preferred other countries to his own. This is an offence that is rarely forgiven by the masses in America, though it is probably the most venial sin that one who has had the opportunities of comparing can commit. Old nations offer so many more inducements than young nations to tempt men of leisure and cultivation to reside in them, that it is not surprising the travelled American should prefer Europe to his own quarter of the world; but the jealousy of a provincial people is not apt to forgive this preference. For myself, I have heard it said, and I believe it to be true, to a certain extent, that countries on the decline, supposing them to have been once at the summit of civilization, make pleasanter abodes for the idler than nations on the advance. This is one of the reasons why Italy attracts so many more visitors than England, though climate must pass for something in such a comparison. But these long absences, and supposed preferences for foreign life, had

made my uncle Ro, in one sense, unpopular with the mass, which has been taught to believe, by means of interested and fulsome eulogies on their own state of society, that it implies something more than a want of taste, almost a want of principle, to prefer any other. This want of popularity, however, was a good deal relieved by a wide and deep conviction of my uncle's probity, as well as of his liberality, his purse having no more string to it than General Harrison's door was thought to have of a latch. But the case was very different with my grandmother. The early part of her life had been spent at the Nest, and it was impossible so excellent a woman could be anything but respected. She had, in truth, been a sore impediment with the anti-renters; more especially in carrying out that part of their schemes which is connected with traduction, and its legitimate offspring, prejudice. It would hardly do to traduce this noble-minded, charitable, spirited, and just woman; yet, hazardous as the experiment must and did seem, it was attempted, and not altogether without success. She was accused of an aristocratic preference of her own family to the families of other people. Patt and I, it was urged, were only her grand-children, and had

ample provision made for us in other estates besides this,—and a woman of Mrs. Littlepage's time of life, it was said, who had one foot in the grave, ought to have too much general philanthropy to give a preference to the interests of mere grandchildren, over the interests of the children of men who had paid her husband and sons rent, now, for quite sixty years. This attack had come from the pulpit, too, or the top of a molasses hogshead, which was made a substitute for a pulpit, by an itinerant preacher, who had taken a bit of job-work, in which the promulgation of the tenets of the gospel and those of anti-rentism was the great end in view.

As I have said, my good grandmother suffered somewhat, in public estimation, in consequence of this assault. It is true, had any one openly charged the circulators of this silly calumny with their offence, they would have stoutly denied it; but it was none the less certain that this charge, among a hundred others, varying from it only in degree, and not at all in character, was industriously circulated in order to render the Littlepages unpopular; unpopularity being among us the sin that is apt to entail all the evil consequences of every other offence.

The reader who is not acquainted with the interior of our social habits, must not suppose that I am colouring for effect. So far from this, I am quite conscious of having kept the tone of the picture down, it being an undeniable truth that nothing of much interest, now-a-days, is left to the simple decision of principles and laws, in this part of the country, at least. The supremacy of numbers is so great, that scarce a private suit of magnitude is committed to a jury without attempts, more or less direct, to influence the common mind in favour of one side or the other, in the hope that the jurors will be induced to think as the majority thinks. In Europe, it is known that judges were, nay, *are*, visited and solicited by the parties; but, here, it is the public that must be treated in the same way. I am far from wishing to blazon the defects of my own country, and I know from observation, that corresponding evils, differing only in their exterior aspects, and in their mode of acting, exist elsewhere; but these are the forms in which some of our defects present themselves, and he is neither a friend to his country, nor an honest man, who wishes them to be bundled up and cloaked, instead of being exposed, understood, and corrected. This

notion of "*nil nisi bene*" has done an infinite degree of harm to the country; and, through the country, to freedom.

I do not think the worship of the temple amounted to any great matter that day in St. Andrew's Church, Ravensnest. Quite half the congregation was blundering through the liturgy, and every man who lost his place in the prayer-book, or who could not find it at all, seemed to fancy it was quite sufficient for the ritual of us semi-papists if he kept his eye on *me* and my canopied pew. How many pharisees were present, who actually believed that I had caused my own barn to be burned, in order to throw opprobrium on the "virtuous," "honest," and "hard-working" tenants, and who gave credit to the stories affecting my title, and all the rest of the stuff that calculating cupidity had set afloat in the country, I have no way of knowing; but subsequent circumstances have given me reason to suppose they were not a few. A great many men left the House of God that morning, I make no doubt, whose whole souls were wrapped up in effecting an act of the grossest injustice, professing to themselves to thank God that they were not as wicked as the being whom they desired to injure.

I stopped to say a word to Mr. Warren, in the vestry-room, after the people were dismissed, for he had not passed the night with us at the Nest, though his daughter had. After we had said a word about the occurrence of the morning, the good rector having heard a rumour of the arrest of certain incendiaries, without knowing who they were, I made a more general remark or two previously to quitting the place.

"Your congregation was unusually large this morning, sir," I said, smiling, "though not altogether as attentive as it might have been."

"I owe it to your return, Mr. Littlepage, aided by the events of the past day or two. At one moment I was afraid that some secret project was on foot, and that the day and place might be desecrated by some scene of disgraceful violence. All has gone off well in that respect, however, and I trust that no harm will come of this crowd. We Americans *have* a respect for sacred things, which will ordinarily protect the temple."

"Did you, then, think St. Andrew's ran any risk to-day, sir?"

Mr. Warren coloured a little, and he hesitated an instant before he answered.

"You doubtless know, young sir," he said,

"the nature of the feeling that is now abroad in the country. With a view to obtain its ends, anti-rentism drags every auxiliary it can find into its ranks, and, among other things, it has assailed your canopied pew. I own, that, at first, I apprehended some assault might be contemplated on *that*."

"Let it come, sir; the pew shall be altered on a general and right principle, but not until it is let alone by envy, malice, and covetousness. It would be worse to make a concession to these than to let the pew stand another half century."

With these words in my mouth, I took my leave, hastening on to overtake the girls in the fields.

CHAPTER V.

"There is a pure republic,—wild, yet strong,—
A 'fierce democracie,' where all are true
To what themselves have voted,—right or wrong,—
And to their laws denominated blue;
(If red, they might to Draco's code belong.)"

HALLECK.

SUCH was my haste in quitting the church, that I did not turn to the right or the left. I saw the light, but well-rounded form of Mary Warren loitering along with the rest of the party, seemingly in waiting for me to join them; and crossing the road, I sprang upon the stile, and thence to the ground, coming up with the girls at the next instant.

"What is the meaning of the crowd, Hugh?" asked my sister, pointing down the road with the stick of her parasol, as she put the question.

"Crowd! I have seen no crowd. Everybody had left the church before I quitted it, and all

has gone off peaceably. Ha! sure enough, that does look like a crowd yonder in the highway. It seems an organized meeting, by George! Yes, there is the chairman, seated on the upper rail of the fence, and the fellow with a bit of paper in his hand is doubtless the secretary. Very American, and regular, all that! Some vile project is hatching, I'll answer for it, under the aspect of an expression of public opinion. See, there is a chap speaking, and gesticulating manfully!"

We all stopped, for a moment, and stood looking at the crowd, which really had all the signs of a public meeting about it. There it had been, the girls told me, ever since they had quitted the church, and seemingly engaged much as it was at that moment. The spectacle was curious, and the day being fine, while time did not press, we lingered in the fields, occasionally stopping to look behind us, and note what was going on in the highway.

In this manner, we might have walked half the distance to the Nest, when, on turning to take another look, we perceived that the crowd had dispersed; some driving off in the ever-recurring one-horse waggon, some on horseback, and others on foot. Three men, however, were

walking fast in our direction, as if desirous of overtaking us. They had already crossed the stile, and were on the path in the field, a route rarely or never taken by any but those who desired to come to the house. Under the circumstances, I determined at once to stop and wait for them. First feeling in my pocket, and making sure of the "revolver," which is getting to be an important weapon, now that private battles are fought not only "yard-arm and yard-arm," but by regular "broadsides," starboard and larboard. I intimated my intention to the girls.

"As these men are evidently coming in quest of me," I remarked, "it may be as well, ladies, for you to continue your walk towards home, while I wait for them on this stile."

"Very true," answered Pat. "They can have little to say that we shall wish to hear, and you will soon overtake us. Remember, we dine at two on Sundays, Hugh; the evening service commencing at four, in this month."

"No, no," said Mary Warren, hurriedly, "we ought not, *cannot*, quit Mr. Littlepage. These men may do him some harm."

I was delighted with this simple, natural manifestation of interest, as well as with the

air of decision with which it was made. Mary, herself, coloured at her own interest, but did not the less maintain the ground she had taken.

"Why, of what use can we be to Hugh, dear, even admitting what you say to be true?" answered Patt; "it were better for us to hurry on to the house, and send those here who can assist him in such a case, than stand by idle and useless."

As if profiting by this hint, Miss Coldbrooke and Miss Marston, who were already some little distance in advance, went off almost on a run, doubtless intending to put my sister's project into execution. But Mary Warren stood firm, and Patt would not desert her friend, whatever might have been her disposition to treat me with less consideration.

"It is true, we may not be able to assist Mr. Littlepage, should violence be attempted," the first remarked; "but violence is, perhaps, what is least to be apprehended. These wretched people so little regard truth, and they will be three to one, if your brother be left alone; that it is better we stay and *hear* what is said, in order that we may assert what the facts really were, should these persons see fit to pervert them, as too often happens."

Both Patt and myself were struck with the prudence and sagacity of this suggestion; and the former now came quite near to the stile, on which I was still standing, with an air as steady and resolute as that of Mary Warren herself. Just then the three men approached. Two of them I knew by name, though scarcely in person, while the third was a total stranger. The two of whom I had some knowledge, were named Bunce and Mowatt, and were both tenants of my own; and, as I have since learned, warm anti-renters. The stranger was a travelling demagogue, who had been at the bottom of the whole affair connected with the late meeting, and who had made his two companions his tools. The three came up to the stile, with an air of great importance, nor could the dignity of their demeanour have been greater had they been ambassadors extraordinary from the Emperor of China.

"Mr. Littlepage," commenced Mr. Bunce, with a particularly important physiognomy, "there has been a meeting of the public, this morning, at which these resolutions was passed. We have been appointed a committee to deliver a copy of them to you, and our duty is now performed, by handing you this paper."

"Not unless I see fit to accept it, I presume, sir," was my answer.

"I should think no man, in a free country, would refuse to receive a set of resolutions that has been passed by a meeting of his fellow-citizens."

"That might depend on circumstances; the character of the resolutions in particular. The freedom of the country it is, precisely, which gives one man the same right to say he cares nothing about your resolutions, as it does you to pass them."

"But you have not looked at the resolutions, sir; and until you do, you cannot know how you may like them."

"That is very true; but I have looked at their bearers, have seen their manner, and do not quite like the assumption of power which says any body of men can send me resolutions whether I like to receive them or not."

This declaration seemed to strike the committee aghast! The idea that *one* man should hesitate to submit himself to a yoke imposed by *a hundred*, was so new and inconceivable to those who deem majorities all in all, that they hardly knew how to take it.* At first there

* The prevalence of the notion of the omnipotence of majorities, in America, is so wide-spread and deep, among the

was an obvious disposition to resent the insult; then came reflection, which probably told them that such a course might not prove so well, the whole terminating in a more philosophical determination of getting along easily.

"Am I to understand, Mr. Littlepage, that you refuse to accept the resolutions of a public meeting?"

"Yes; of half-a-dozen public meetings put together, if those resolutions are offensive, or are offered offensively."

people in general, as to form a distinctive trait in the national character. It is doing an infinity of mischief, by being mistaken for the governing principle of the institutions, when in fact it is merely a necessary expedient to decide certain questions which must be decided by somebody, and in some mode or other. Kept in its proper sphere, the use of majorities is replete with justice, so far as justice *can* be exercised among men; abused, it opens the highway to the most intolerable tyranny. As a matter of course, the errors connected with this subject vary through all the gradations of intellect and selfishness. The following anecdote will give the reader some notion how the feeling impressed a stranger shortly after his arrival in this country.

A year or two since, the writer had in his service an Irishman who had been only two years in the country. It was a part of this man's duty to look after the welfare of certain pigs, of which one occupied the position of a "runt." "Has your honour looked at the pigs lately?" said the honest fellow, one day. "No, not lately, Pat; is there any change?" "That is there, indeed, sir, and a great change. The little fellow is getting the *majority* of the rest, and will make the best hog of 'em all!"—EDITOR.

"As to the resolutions, you can know nothing, having never seen them. Of the right of any number of the people to pass such resolutions as they may think proper, I presume there can be no question."

"Of that right, sir, there is a very great question, as has been settled within the last few years, in our own Courts. But, even if the right existed, and in as broad a way as you seem to think, it would not form a right to force these resolutions on me."

"I am, then, to tell the people you refuse even to read their resolutions, 'Squire Littlepage."

"You can tell them what you please, sir. I know of no people, except in the legal sense, and under the limited powers that they exercise by law. As for this new power, which is rising up in the country, and has the impudence to call itself the people, though composed of little knots of men got together by management, and practised on by falsehood, it has neither my respect nor dread; and as I hold it in contempt, I shall treat it with contempt, whenever it comes in my way."

"I am, then, to tell the people of Ravensnest, you hold them in contempt, sir."

"I authorize you to tell the people of Ravensnest nothing, as coming from me, for I do not know that the people of Ravensnest have employed you. If you will ask me, respectfully, as if you were soliciting a favour instead of demanding a right, to read the contents of the paper you hold in your hand, I may be willing to comply. What I object to, is a handful of men's getting together, setting themselves up as the people, pretending to authority in that capacity, and claiming a right to *force* their notions on other folks."

The three committee-men now drew back a few paces, and consulted together apart, for two or three minutes. While they were thus employed, I heard the sweet gentle voice of Mary Warren say at my elbow—"Take their resolutions, Mr. Littlepage, and get rid of them. I dare say they are very silly, but you will get rid of them all the sooner, by receiving the paper." This was woman's advice, which is a little apt to err on the side of concession, when her apprehensions are aroused; but I was spared the pain of not complying with it by the altered tone of the trio, who now came up to the stile again, having apparently come to a final decision in the premises.

"Mr. Hugh Roger Littlepage, junior," said Bunce in a solemn voice, and in a manner as precise as if he were making some legal tender that was of the last importance, and which required set phrases, "I now ask you, in a most respectful manner, if you will consent to receive this paper. It contains certain resolutions, passed with great unanimity by the people of Ravensnest, and which may be found to affect you. I am directed respectfully to ask you, if you will accept this copy of the said resolutions."

I cut the rest of the speech short by receiving the proffered paper, and I thought all three of the worthy ambassadors looked disappointed at my having done so. This gave a newt urn to my ideas, and had they now demanded their resolutions back again, they should not have had them, so long as the revolvers could do their duty. For a moment, I do believe Bunce was for trying the experiment. He and his companions would have been delighted to have it in their power to run up and down the country crying out that the aristocrat-landlord, young Littlepage, held the people in contempt, and had refused even to accept the resolutions they had deigned, in their majesty, to pass.

As it was, however, I had sufficiently rebuked the presumption of these pretenders to liberty, avoided all the consequences of their clamour in that behalf, and had an opportunity to gratify a curiosity to know what the leaders of the meeting had been about, and to read their resolutions. I say, the leaders of the meeting, for it is very certain the meetings themselves, on all such occasions, have no more to do with the forming, or entertaining the opinions that are thus expressed, than if they had been in Kamtschatka, the whole time. Folding the paper, therefore, and putting it in my pocket, I bowed to the committee, saying, as I descended the stile on the other side of the fence—

"It is well, gentlemen; if the resolutions require any notice, they'll be sure to receive it. Public meetings held of a Sunday are so unusual in this part of the world, that this may have interest with that small portion of the State which does not dwell at Ravensnest."

I thought the committee was a little abashed; but the stranger, or the travelling demagogue, caught at my words, and answered as I walked away, in company with Patt and Mary Warren—

"The better day, the better deed. The

matter related to the sabbath, and no time so suitable as the sabbath to act on it."

I will own I was dying with curiosity to read the resolutions, but dignity prevented any such thing until we had reached a spot where the path led through a copse, that concealed us from observation. Once under that cover, however, I eagerly drew out the paper, the two girls drawing near to listen, with as lively an interest as that I felt myself in the result.

"Here you may see at a glance," I cried, shaking open the folds of the paper, "the manner in which the *people* so often pass their resolutions! All this writing has a very schoolmaster air, and has been done with care and deliberation, whereas there was certainly no opportunity to make a copy as fair as this of anything out in the highway where the meeting was actually held. This proves that matters have been cut and dried for the sovereign people, who, like other monarchs, are saved a great deal of trouble by their confidential servants."

"I dare say," said Patt, "two or three men down at the village prepared everything, and then brought their work up to the meeting to be

read and approved, and to go forth as public sentiment."

"If it were only honestly approved by even those who heard it read, it would be another matter; but two-thirds of every meeting are nothing but dough-faces, that are moulded to look whichever way the skilful manager may choose. But let us see what these notable resolutions are; we may like them, possibly, after having read them."

"It is so extraordinary to have a public meeting of a Sunday in this part of the world!" exclaimed Mary Warren.

I now set about reading the contents of the paper, which, at a glance, I saw had been very carefully prepared for publication, and no doubt would soon figure in some of the journals. Fortunately, this business has been so much overdone, and so many meetings are held that flatly contradict each other, though all represent public sentiment, fire is made so effectually to fight fire, that the whole procedure is falling into contempt, and the public is actually losing the great advantage which, under a more temperate use of its power, it might possess, by making known from time to time, as serious occasions offered, its true opinions and wishes. As things actually are, every man of intelligence

is fully aware that simulated public opinions are much the most noisy and active in the country, and he regards nothing of the sort of which he hears or reads, unless he happen to know something of the authority. It is the same with the newspaper press generally; into such deep discredit has it fallen, that not only is its power to do evil much curtailed, but it has nearly lost all power to do good; for, by indulging in licentiousness, and running into the habit of crying "wolf," nobody is disposed to believe, were the beast actually committing its ravages in the flocks of the nation. There are but two ways for a man to regain a position from which he has departed; the one is by manfully retracing his steps, and the other is by making a circuit so complete, that all who choose to watch him may see and understand all sides of him, and estimate him accordingly. The last is likely to be the career of demagogueism and the press; both of which have already gone so far as to render retreat next to impossible, and who can only regain any portion of public confidence by being satisfied with completing their circuit, and falling in the rear of the nation, content to follow those whom it has been their craving ambition to lead.

"At a meeting of the citizens of Ravensnest," I began to read aloud, "spontaneously convened, June 22d, 1845, in the public highway, after attending divine service in the Episcopal meeting-house, according to the forms of the established denomination of England, on the church and state system, Onesiphorus Hayden, Esquire, was called to the chair, and Pulaski Todd, Esquire, was appointed Secretary. After a luminous and eloquent exposition of the objects of the meeting, and some most pungent strictures on aristocracy and the rights of man, from Demosthenes Hewlett and John Smith, Esquires, the following expression of public sentiment was sustained by an undivided unanimity:—Resolved, that a temperate expression of public opinion is useful to the rights of freemen, and is one of the most precious privileges of freedom, as the last has been transmitted to us in a free country by our ancestors, who fought and bled for free and equal institutions on free and equal grounds.

"Resolved, That we prize this privilege, and shall ever watch over its exercise with vigilance, the price of liberty.

"Resolved, That, as all men are equal in the

eyes of the law, so are they much more so in the eyes of God.

"Resolved, That meeting-houses are places constructed for the convenience of the people, and that nothing ought to be admitted into them that is opposed to public sentiment, or which can possibly offend it.

"Resolved, That, in our judgment, the seat that is good enough for one man is good enough for another; that we know no difference in families and races, and that pews ought to be constructed on the principles of equality, as well as laws.

"Resolved, That canopies are royal distinctions, and quite unsuited to republicans; and most of all, to republican meeting-houses.

"Resolved, That religion should be adapted to the institutions of a country, and that a republican form of government is entitled to a republican form of religion; and that we do not see the principles of freedom in privileged seats in the House of God."

"That resolution has been got up as a commentary on what has been circulated so much, of late, in the newspapers," cried Mary Warren, quickly; "in which it has been advanced, as a

recommendation of certain sects, that their dogmas and church-government are more in harmony with republicanism than certain others, our own church included."

"One would think," I answered, "if this conformity be a recommendation, that it would be the duty of men to make their institutions conform to the church, instead of the church's conforming to the institutions."

"Yes; but it is not the fashion to reason in this way, now-a-days. Prejudice is just as much appealed to in matters connected with religion, as with anything else."

"Resolved," I continued to read, "That in placing a canopy over his pew, in St. Andrew's meeting-house, Ravensnest, Gen. Cornelius Littlepage conformed to the spirit of a past age, rather than to the spirit of the present time; and that we regard its continuance there as an aristocratical assumption of a superiority that is opposed to the character of the government, offensive to liberty, and dangerous as an example."

"Really, that is too bad!" exclaimed Patt, vexed at heart, even while she laughed at the outrageous silliness of the resolu-

tions, and all connected with them. "Dear, liberal-minded grandpapa, who fought and bled for that very liberty about which these people cant so much, and who was actively concerned in framing the very institutions that they do not understand, and are constantly violating, is accused of being false to what were notoriously his own principles!"

"Never mind that, my dear; there only remain three more resolutions: let us hear them. 'Resolved, That we see an obvious connexion between crowned heads, patents of nobility, canopied pews, personal distinctions, leasehold tenures, land-LORDS, days' works, fat fowls, quarter-sales, three-lives leases, and RENT.'

"Resolved, That we are of opinion that, when the owners of barns wish them destroyed, for any purpose whatever, there is a mode less alarming to a neighbourhood than by setting them on fire, and thus giving rise to a thousand reports and accusations that are wanting in the great merit of truth.

"Resolved, That a fair draft be made of these resolutions, and a copy of them delivered to one Hugh Roger Littlepage, a citizen of Ravensnest, in the county of Washington; and that Peter

Bunce, Esq., John Mowatt, Esq., and Hezekiah Trott, Esq., be a committee to see that this act be performed.

"Whereupon the meeting adjourned *sine die*. Onesiphorus Hayden, chairman; Pulaski Todd, secretary."

"Whe-e-e-w!" I whistled, "here's gunpowder enough for another Waterloo!"

"What means that last resolution, Mr. Littlepage?" asked Mary Warren, anxiously. "That about the barn."

"Sure enough; there is a latent meaning there which has its sting. Can the scoundrels intend to insinuate that *I* caused that barn to be set on fire!"

"If they should, it is scarcely more than they have attempted to do with every landlord they have endeavoured to rob," said Patt, with spirit. "Calumny seems a natural weapon of those who get their power by appealing to numbers."

"That is natural enough, my dear sister; since prejudice and passion are quite as active agents as reason and facts, in the common mind. But this is a slander that shall be looked to. If I find that these men really wish to circulate a report that I caused my own barn to be set on

fire,—pshaw! nonsense, after all. Have we not Newcome, and that other rascal, in confinement, at this moment, for attempting to set fire to my *house?*"

"Be not too confident, Mr. Littlepage," said Mary, with an anxiety so pointed that I could not but feel its flattery—"my dear father tells me he has lost much of his confidence in innocence, except as One above all weaknesses shall be the judge: this very story may be got up purposely to throw distrust on your accusations against the two incendiaries you have taken in the act. Remember how much of the facts will depend on your own testimony."

"I shall have *you* to sustain me, Miss Warren, and the juror is not living, who would hesitate to believe that to which you will testify. But here we are approaching the house; we will talk no more on the subject, lest it distress my grandmother."

We found all quiet at the Nest, no report of any sort having come from the red-men. Sunday was like any other day to them, with the exception that they so far deferred to our habits as to respect it, to a certain extent, while in our presence. Some writers have imagined

that the aborigines of America are of the lost tribes of Israel; but it seems to me that such a people could never have existed apart, uninfluenced by foreign association, and preserved no tradition, no memorial, of the Jewish Sabbath. Let this be as it may, John, who met us at the door, which we reached just after my uncle and grandmother, reported all quiet, so far as he knew anything of the state of the farm-buildings.

"They got enough last night, I'se thinking, Mr. Hugh, and has found out by this time, that it's better to light a fire in one of their own cook-stoves, than come to light it on the floor of a gentleman's kitchen. I never heard it said, sir, that the Hamericans was as much Hirish as they be Henglish, but to me they seems to grow every day more like the wild Hirishers, of whom we used to hear so much in Lun'un. Your honoured father, sir, would never have believed that his own dwelling would be entered, at night, by men who are his very neighbours, and who act like burglariouses, as if they were so many Newgate birds,—no. Why, Mr. Hugh, this 'Squire Newcome, as they call him, is an hattorney, and has often dined here at the Nest.

I have 'anded him his soup, and fish, and wine, fifty times, just as if he was a gentleman, and to his sister, Miss Hopportunity, too; and they to come to set fire to the house, at midnight!"

"You do Miss Opportunity injustice, John; for *she* has not had the least connexion with the matter."

"Well, sir, nobody knows anything now-a-days—I declare, my eyes be getting weak, or there is the young lady, at this very instant!"

"Young lady! where?—you do not mean Opportunity Newcome, surely?"

"I does, though, sir, and it's she, sure enough. If that isn't Miss Hopportunity, the prisoner that the savages has got up in the cellar of the old farm-house, isn't her brother."

John was quite right; there was Opportunity standing in the very path, and at the very spot where I had last seen her disappear from my sight, the past night. That spot was just where the path plunged into the wooded ravine; and so far was her person concealed by the descent, that we could only perceive the head, and the upper part of the body. The girl had shown herself just that much, in order to attract my atten-

tion, in which she had no sooner succeeded, than, by moving downward a few paces, she was entirely hid from sight. Cautioning John to say nothing of what had passed, I sprang down the steps, and walked in the direction of the ravine, perfectly satisfied I was expected, and far from certain that this visit did not portend further evil.

The distance was so short that I was soon at the verge of the ravine, but when I reached it, Opportunity had disappeared. Owing to the thicket, her concealment was easily obtained, while she might be within a few yards from me, and I plunged downwards, bent only on ascertaining her object. One gleam of distrust shot across my mind, I will own, as I strided down the declivity; but it was soon lost in the expectation and curiosity that were awakened by the appearance of the girl.

I believe it has already been explained, that in this part of the lawn a deep, narrow ravine had been left in wood, and that the bridle-path that leads to the hamlet had been carried directly through it, for effect. This patch of wood may be three or four acres in extent, following the course of the ravine until it reaches the meadows, and it contains three or

four rustic seats, intended to be used in the warmer months. As Opportunity was accustomed to all the windings and turnings of the place, she had posted herself near one of these seats, which stood in a dense thicket, but so near the main path as to enable her to let me know where she was to be found, by a low utterance of my name, as my tread announced my approach. Springing up the by-path, I was at her side in an instant. I do believe that, now she had so far succeeded, the girl sunk upon the seat from inability to stand.

"Oh! Mr. Hugh!" she exclaimed, looking at me with a degree of nature and concern in her countenance that it was not usual to see there—"Sen—my poor brother Sen—what *have* I done?—what *have* I done?"

"Will you answer me one or two questions, Miss Opportunity, with frankness, under the pledge that the replies never shall be used to injure you or yours? This is a very serious affair, and should be treated with perfect frankness."

"I will answer any thing to *you*—any question you can put me, though I might blush to do so—but," laying her hand familiarly, not to

say tenderly on my arm—"why should we be *Mr.* Hugh and *Miss* Opportunity to each other, when we were so long Hugh and Op? Call me Op again, and I shall feel that the credit of my family and the happiness of poor Sen are, after all, in the keeping of a true friend."

"No one can be more willing to do this than myself, my dear Op, and I am willing to be Hugh again. But, you know all that has passed."

"I do—yes, the dreadful news has reached us, and mother wouldn't leave me a moment's peace till I stole out again to see you."

"Again—was your mother, then, acquainted with the visit of last night?"

"Yes, yes—she knew it all, and advised it all."

"Your mother is a most thoughtful and prudent parent," I answered, biting my lip, "and I shall know, hereafter, how much I am indebted to her. To *you*, Opportunity, I owe the preservation of my house, and possibly the lives of all who are most dear to me."

"Well, that's something, any how. There's no grief that hasn't its relief. But, you must know, Hugh, that I never could or did suppose that Sen himself would be so weak as to come in

his own person on such an errand! I didn't want telling to understand that in anti-rent times, fire and sword are the law,—but, take him in general, Sen is altogether prudent and cautious. I'd a bit my tongue off before I'd a got my own brother into so cruel a scrape. No, no—don't think so ill of me as to suppose I came to tell of Sen!"

"It is enough for me that I know how much trouble you took to warn me of danger. It is unnecessary for me to think of *you* in any other light than that of a friend."

"Ah, Hugh! how happy and merry we all of us used to be a few years since! That was before your Miss Coldbrookes, and Miss Marstons, and Mary Warrens ever saw the country. *Then* we *did* enjoy ourselves, and I hope such times will return. If Miss Martha would only stick to old friends instead of running after new ones, Ravensnest would be Ravensnest again."

"You are not to censure my sister for loving her own closest associates best. She is several years our junior, you will remember, and was scarcely of an age to be *our* companion six years ago."

Opportunity had the grace to colour a little,

for she had only used Patt as a cloak to make her assaults on me, and she knew as well as I did that my sister was good seven years younger than herself. This feeling, however, was but momentary, and she next turned to the real object of this visit.

"What am I to tell mother, Hugh?—You will let Sen off, I know!"

I reflected, for the first time, on the hardships of the case; but felt a strong reluctance to allow incendiaries to escape.

"The facts must be known, soon, all over the town," I remarked.

"No fear of that: they are pretty much known, already. News *does* fly *fast*, at Ravensnest, all must admit."

"Ay, if it would only fly *true*. But, your brother can hardly remain here, after such an occurrence."

"Lord! How you talk! If the law will only let him alone, who'd trouble him for this? You havn't been home long enough, to learn that folks don't think half as much of setting fire to a house, in anti-rent times, as they'd think of a trespass, under the old-fashioned law. Anti-rent alters the whole spirit."

How true was this! And we have lads among us, who have passed from their tenth to their eighteenth and twentieth years, in a condition of society that is almost hopelessly abandoned to the most corrupting influence of all the temptations that beset human beings. It is not surprising that men begin to regard arson as a venial offence, when the moral feeling of the community is thus unhinged, and boys are suffered to grow into manhood, in the midst of notions so fatal to every thing that is just and safe.

"But the law itself will not be quite as complaisant as the 'folks.' It will scarcely allow incendiaries to escape; and your brother would be compelled to flee the land."

"What of that? How many go off, and stay off for a time; and that's better than going up north to work at the new prison. I'm not a bit afraid of Sen's being hanged, for these an't hanging times, in this country; but it is *some* disgrace to a family to have a member in the State's prison. As for any punishment that is lasting, you can see how it is, as well as I. There 've been men murdered about anti-rentism, but, Lord! the senators and

assemblymen will raise such a rumpus, if you go to punish them, that it won't be long, if things go on as they have, before it will be thought more honourable to be put in jail for shooting a peace-officer, than to stay out of it, for not having done it. Talk's all; and if folks have a mind to make any thing honourable, they've only to say so often enough, to make it out."

Such were the notions of Miss Opportunity Newcome, on the subject of modern morals, and how far was she from the truth? I could not but smile at the manner in which she treated things, though there was a homely and practical common sense in her way of thinking, that was probably of more efficiency than would have been the case with a more refined and nicer code. She looked at things as they are, and that is always something towards success.

As for myself, I was well enough disposed to consider Opportunity, in this unfortunate affair of the fire, for it would have been a cruel thing to suffer the girl to imagine she had been an instrument in destroying her brother. It is true, there is no great danger of a rogue's

being hanged, now-a-days, and Seneca was not sufficiently a gentleman, though very tenacious of the title, to endanger his neck. Had he been a landlord, and caught lighting a fire on the kitchen-floor of one of the tenants, the State would not grow hemp enough for his execution; but it was a very different thing to catch a tenant at that work. I could not but ask myself, how many of the "honourable gentlemen" at Albany would interfere in *my* behalf, had matters been reversed; for this is the true mode of arriving at the "spirit of the institutions;" or, rather, I have just as good a right to affirm such is their "spirit," as any one has to assert that the leasehold tenure is opposed to them; the laws and institutions themselves, being equally antagonist to both.

The results of the interview I had with Opportunity were, 1stly, — I kept my heart just where it was at its commencement, though I am not certain that it was in my own custody; 2dly, — The young lady left me much encouraged on the subject of the credit of the Newcomes, though I took very good care not to put myself in her power, by promising to compromise felony; 3dly, — I invited the sister

to come openly to the Nest, that evening, as one of the means to be employed in attaining her ends—as respects Seneca, be it remembered, not as respects *me;* and lastly, we parted just as good friends as we ever had been, and entertaining exactly the same views as regards each other. What those views were, it may not be modest in me to record.

CHAPTER VI.

"If men desire the rights of property, they must take their consequences; distinction in social classes. Without the rights of property civilization can hardly exist; while the highest class of improvements is probably the result of the very social distinctions that so many decry. The great political problem to be solved, is to ascertain if the social distinctions that are inseparable from civilization can really exist with perfect equality in political rights. We are of opinion they can; and as much condemn him who vainly contends for a visionary and impracticable social equality, as we do him who would deny to men equal opportunities for advancement."

POLITICAL ESSAY.

My interview with Opportunity Newcome remained a secret between those who first knew of it. The evening service in St. Andrew's was attended only by the usual congregation, all the curiosity of the multitude seeming to have been allayed by the visit in the morning. The remainder of the day passed as usual, and, after enjoying a pleasant even-tide, and the earlier hours of the night in the company of

the girls, I retired early to bed, and slept profoundly until morning. My uncle Ro partook of my own philosophical temper, and we encouraged each other in it by a short conversation that occurred in his room before we respectively retired to rest.

"I agree with you, Hugh," said my uncle, in reply to a remark of my own; "there is little use in making ourselves unhappy about evils that *we* cannot help. If we *are* to be burnt up and stripped of our property, we *shall* be burnt up and stripped of our property. I have a competency secured in Europe, and we can all live on *that*, with economy, should the worst come to the worst."

"It is a strange thing to hear an American talk of seeking a refuge of any sort in the old world!"

"If matters proceed in the lively manner they have for the last ten years, you'll hear of it often. Hitherto, the rich of Europe have been in the habit of laying by a penny in America against an evil day; but the time will soon come, unless there is a great change, when the rich of America will return the compliment, in kind. We are worse off than if we were in a state of nature, in many respects;

having *our* hands tied by the responsibility that belongs to our position and means, while those who choose to assail us are under a mere nominal restraint. They make the magistrates, who are altogether in their interests; and they elect the sheriffs, who are to see the laws executed. The theory is, that the people are sufficiently virtuous to perform all these duties well; but no provision has been made for the case in which the people themselves happen to go astray, *en masse*."

"We have our governors and masters at Albany, sir."

"Yes, we *have* our governors and servants at Albany, and there they are! There has not been the time, probably, since this infernal spirit first had its rise among us, that a clear, manly, energetic, and well-principled proclamation, alone, issued by the Governor of this State, would not have aroused all the better feelings of the community, and put this thing down; but, small as would have been that tribute to the right, it has never been paid, and, until we drop double-distilled patriots, and have recourse again to the old-fashioned, high-principled gentlemen for offices of mark, it never will be done. Heaven preserve me from extra-

virtuous, patriotic, and enlightened citizens; no good ever comes of them."

"I believe the wisest way, sir, is to make up our minds that we have reached the point of reaction in the institutions, and be ready to submit to the worst. I keep the 'revolver' well primed, and hope to escape being burnt up at least."

After a little more such discourse, we parted and sought our pillows, and I can say that I never slept more soundly in my life. If I did lose my estate, it was what other men had suffered and survived, and why might not I as well as another? It is true, those other men were, in the main, the victims of what are called tyrants; but others, again, had certainly been wronged by the masses. Thousands have been impoverished in France, for instance, by the political confiscations of the multitude, and thousands enriched by ill-gotten gains, profiting by the calamities of those around them; and what has happened there might happen here. Big words ought to pass for nothing. No man was ever a whit more free because he was the whole time boasting of his liberty, and I was not now to learn that when numbers did inflict

a wrong, it was always of the most intolerable character. Ordinarily, they were not much disposed to this species of crime; but men in masses were no more infallible than individuals. In this philosophic mood I slept.

I was awoke next morning by John's appearing at my bedside, after having opened the shutter of my windows.

"I declare to you, Mr. Hugh," began this well-meaning, but sometimes officious servant, "I don't know what will come next at Ravensnest, now the evil spirit has got uppermost among the inhabitants!"

"Tut, tut, John—what you call the evil spirit is only the 'Spirit of the Institutions;' and is to be honoured, instead of disliked."

"Well, sir, I don't know what they calls it, for they talks so much about the hinstitutions in this country, I never can find out what they would be at. There was a hinstitution near where I lived in my last place, at the West End, in Lon'on, and there they taught young masters to speak and write Latin and Greek. But hinstitutions in Hamerica must mean something, for them as doesn't know any more Latin than I do seems to be quite hintimate

with these Hamerican hinstitutions. " But, Mr. Hugh, would you, *could* you, believe the people committed parricide last night?"

"I am not all surprised at it, for, to me, they have seemed to be bent on matricide for some time, calling the country their mother."

"It's hawful, sir—it's truly hawful, when a whole people commits such a crime as parricide! I know'd you would be shocked to hear it, Mr. Hugh, and so I just came in to let you know it."

"I am infinitely obliged to you for this attention, my good fellow, and shall be still more so when you tell me all about it."

"Yes, sir, most willingly, and most unwillingly, too. But there's no use in 'iding the fact; it's gone, Mr. Hugh!"

"What is gone, John?—Speak out, my good fellow; I can bear it."

"The pew, sir—or rather that beautiful canopy that covered it, and made it look so much like the Lord Mayor's seat in Guildhall. I 'ave hadmired and honoured that canopy, sir, as the most helegant hobject in this country, sir."

"So they have destroyed it at last, have they? Encouraged and sustained by an expression of

public sentiment, as proclaimed in a meeting that had a chairman and secretary, they have actually cut it down, I suppose?"

"They have, sir; and a pretty job they've made of it. There it stands, up at Miller's, hover his pig-pen!"

This was not a very heroic termination of the career of the obnoxious canopy; but it was one that made me laugh heartily. John was a little offended at this levity, and he soon left me to finish my toilet by myself. I dare say, many of the honest folk of Ravensnest would have been as much surprised as John himself, at the indifference I manifested at the fate of this dignified pew. But, certainly, so far as my own social elevation, or social depression, were concerned, I cared nothing about it. It left me just where I was—neither greater nor otherwise; and as for any monuments to let the world know who my predecessors had been, or who I was at that moment, the country itself, or the part of it in which we dwelt, was sufficient. Its history must be forgotten, or changed, before our position could be mistaken; though I dare say, the time will come when some extremely sublimated friend of equality will wish to extinguish all the lights of the past, in

order that there may not exist that very offensive distinction of one man's name being illustrated, while another man's name is not. The pride of family is justly deemed the most offensive of all pride, since a man may value himself on a possession to which he has not the smallest claim in the way of personal merit, while those of the highest personal claims are altogether deprived of an advantage, to the enjoyment of which ancestors alone have created the right. Now, the institutions, both in their letter and their spirit, *do* favour justice, in this particular, as far as they can; though even they are obliged to sustain one of the most potent agents to such distinctions, by declaring, through the laws, that the child shall succeed to the estate of the father. When we shall get every thing straight, and as it ought to be in this progressive country, Heaven only knows; for I find my tenants laying stress on the fact that *their* fathers have leased my lands for generations, while they are quite willing to forget that *my* fathers were the lessors all the while.

I found all four of the girls on the piazza, breathing the air of as balmy a summer morning as a bountiful nature ever bestowed. They had heard of the fate of the canopy, which affected

them differently, and somewhat according to temperament. Henrietta Coldbrooke laughed at it violently, and in a way I did not like; your laughing young lady rarely having much beyond merriment in her. I make all allowance for youthful spirits, and a natural disposition to turn things into fun; but it was too much to laugh at this exploit of the anti-renters, for quite half an hour together. I liked Anne Marston's manner of regarding it better. She smiled a good deal, and laughed just enough to show that she was not insensible to the effect of an absurdity; and then she looked as if she felt that a wrong had been done. As for Patt, she was quite indignant at the insult; nor was she very backward in letting her opinions be known. But Mary Warren's manner of viewing the affair pleased me best, as indeed was fast getting to be the fact with most of her notions and conceits. She manifested neither levity nor resentment. Once or twice, when a droll remark escaped Henrietta, she laughed a little; a very little, and involuntarily, as it might be—just enough to prove that there was fun in her—when she would make some sensible observation, to the effect that the evil temper that was up in the country was the true

part of the transaction that deserved attention; and that she *felt* this as well as saw it. Nobody seemed to care for the canopy—not even my excellent grandmother, in whose youth the church had been built, when distinctions of this sort were more in accordance with the temper and habits of the times, than they are to-day. I had been on the piazza just long enough to note this difference in the manner of the girls, when my grandmother joined us.

"Oh! grandmother, have you heard what those wretches of 'Injins,' as they are rightly named, have been doing with the canopy of the pew?" cried Patt, who had been at the bedside of our venerable parent, and kissed her an hour before: "they have torn it down, and placed it over the pen of the pigs!"

A common laugh, in which Patt herself now joined, interrupted the answer for a moment, old Mrs. Littlepage herself manifesting a slight disposition to make one of the amused.

"I have heard it all, my dear," returned my grandmother, "and, on the whole, think the thing is well enough gotten rid of. I do not believe it would have done for Hugh to have had it taken down, under a menace, while it is perhaps better that it should no longer stand."

"Were such things common in your youth, Mrs. Littlepage?" asked Mary Warren.

"Far from uncommon; though less so in country than in town churches. You will remember that we were but recently separated from England, when St. Andrew's was built, and that most of the old colonial ideas prevailed among us. People, in that day, had very different notions of social station, from those which now exist; and New York was, in a certain sense, one of the most, perhaps *the* most aristocratical colony in the country. It was somewhat so under the Dutch, republicans as they were, with its patroons; but when the colony was transferred to the English, it became a royal colony at once, and English notions were introduced as a matter of course. In no other colony was there as many manors, perhaps; the slavery of the south introducing quite a different system there, while the policy of Penn and of New England, generally, was more democratic. I apprehend, Roger, that we owe this anti-rent struggle, and particularly the feebleness with which it is resisted, to the difference of opinion that prevails among the people of New England, who have sent so many immigrants among us, and our own purely New York notions."

"You are quite right, my dear mother," answered my uncle, "though New Yorkers, by descent, are not wanting among the tenants, to sustain the innovation. The last act either from direct cupidity, or to gain popularity with a set; whereas, as I view the matter, the first are influenced by the notions of the state of society from which either they themselves, or their parents, were directly derived. A very large proportion of the present population of New York is of New England origin. Perhaps one-third have this extraction, either as born there, or as the sons or grandsons of those who were. Now, in New England generally, great equality of condition exists, more especially when you rise above the lower classes; there being very few, out of the large trading towns, who would be deemed rich in New York, and scarcely such a thing as a large landholder, at all. The relation of landlord and tenant, as connected with what we should term estates, is virtually unknown to New England; though Maine may afford some exceptions. This circumstance is owing to the peculiar origin of the people, and to the fact that emigration has so long carried off the surplus population; the bulk of those who remain being able to possess freeholds.

There is a natural antipathy in men who have been educated in such a state of society, to anything that seems to place others in positions they do not, and cannot occupy themselves. Now, while the population of New York may be one-third, perhaps, of New England descent, and consequently more or less of New England notions, a much larger proportion of the lawyers, editors of newspapers, physicians, and active politicians, are of that class. We think little, and talk little of these circumstances; for no nation inquires into its moral influences, and what I may call its political statistics, less than the Americans; but they produce large consequences.

"Am I to understand you, sir, to say that anti-rentism is of New England origin?"

"Perhaps not. Its origin was probably more directly derived from the devil, who has tempted the tenants as he is known once to have tempted the Saviour. The outbreak was originally among the descendants of the Dutch, for they happened to be the tenants, and, as for the theories that have been broached, they savour more of the reaction of European abuses, than of anything American at all; and least of all of anything from New England, where there is generally

a great respect for the rights of property, and unusual reverence for the law. Still, I think we owe our greatest danger to the opinions and habits of those of New England descent among us."

"This seems a little paradoxical, uncle Ro, and I confess I should like to hear it explained."

"I will endeavour so to do, and in as few words as possible. The real danger is among those who influence legislation. Now, you will find hundreds of men among us, who feel the vast importance of respecting contracts, who perceive much of the danger of anti-rentism, and who wish to see it defeated in its violent and most offensive forms, but who lean against the great landlords, on account of those secret jealousies which cause most men to dislike advantages in which they do not share, and who would gladly enough see all leases abolished, if it could be done without a too violent conflict with justice. When you talk with these men, they will make you the common-place but unmeaning profession of wishing to see every husbandman the owner in fee of his farm, instead of a tenant, and that it is a *hardship* to rent, and quantities of such twaddle. Henry

the Fourth, in a much better spirit, is said to have wished that each of his subjects had "*une poule dans son pôt*," but that wish did not put it there. So it is with this idle profession of wishing to see every American husbandman a freeholder. We all know such a state of society never did exist, and probably never will; and it is merely placing a vapid pretension to philanthropy in the foreground of a picture that should rigidly represent things as they are. For my part, I am one of those who do not believe that this or any other country would be any the better for dispensing with landlords and tenants."

"Mr. Littlepage!" exclaimed Mary Warren, "you surely do not mean that competency widely diffused, is not better than wealth in a few hands, and poverty in a great many!"

"No, I shall not go as far as that; but I do say that what this country most wants just now, is precisely the class that is connected with the independence of character and station, the leisure with its attendant cultivation and refinement, and the *principles* as well as taste that are connected with all."

"Principles! Mr. Littlepage!" added my uncle's sweet interlocutor; "my father would

hardly uphold *that*, though he agrees with you in so much of what you say."

"I do not know that. I repeat the word *principles*; for, when you have a class of men, who are removed from a large range of temptations, without being placed above public opinion, you get precisely those who are most likely to uphold that sort of secondary, but highly useful morals, which are not directly derived from purely religious duties. Against the last I shall not say one word, as it comes from the grace, which is of the power of God, and is happily as accessible to the poor as to the rich, and more too; but, of men as they are, not one in a hundred regulates his life by a standard created under such impulses; and even when they do, the standard itself is, in some degree, qualified by the ordinary notions, I apprehend. The Christian morality of an East Indian is not identical with that of a Puritan, or that of a man of highly cultivated mind, with that of one who has enjoyed fewer advantages. There is one class of principles, embracing all those that are adverse to the littlenesses of daily practice, which is much the more extended among the liberal-minded and educated, and it is to that set of principles I

refer. Now we want a due proportion of that class of men, as our society is getting to be organized; of those who are superior to meannesses."

"All this would be deemed atrociously aristocratic, were it told in Gath!" exclaimed Patt, laughing.

"It is atrociously common sense, notwithstanding," answered my uncle, who was not to be laughed out of anything he felt to be true; "and the facts will show it. New England early established a system of common schools, and no part of the world, perhaps, has a population that is better grounded in intelligence. This has been the case so long as to put the people of Connecticut and Massachusetts, for instance, as a whole, materially in advance of the people of any other State, New York included; although, by taking the system from our eastern brethren, we are now doing pretty well. Notwithstanding, who will say that New England is as far advanced, in many material things, as the middle States? To begin with the kitchen—her best cookery is much below that of even the humbler classes of the true middle States' families: take her language for another test, it is provincial and vulgar; and

there is no exaggeration in saying that the labouring classes of the middle States, if not of New England origin, use better English than thousands of educated men in New England itself. Both of these peculiarities, as I conceive, come from the fact that in one part of the country there has been a class to give a tone that does not exist in the other. The gentlemen of the larger towns in the east have an influence where they live, no doubt; but in the interior, as no one leads, all these matters are left to the common mind to get along with, as well as it can."

"Aristocratic, sir—rank aristocracy!"

"If it be, has aristocracy, as you call it, which in this instance must only mean decided social position, no advantages? Is not even a wealthy idler of some use in a nation? He contributes his full share to the higher civilization that is connected with the tastes and refinements, and, in fact, he forms it. In Europe they will tell you that a court is necessary to such civilization; but facts contradict the theory. Social classes, no doubt, are; but they can exist independently of courts, as they can, have, do, and ever will, in the face of democracy. Now, con-

nect this class with the landed interest, and see how much your chances for material improvement are increased. Coke, of Norfolk, probably conferred more benefit on the husbandry of England than all the mere operatives that existed in his time. It is from such men, indeed, from their enterprise and their means, that nearly all the greater benefits come. The fine wool of America is mainly owing to Livingston's connexion with land; and if you drive such men out of existence, you must drive the benefits they confer with them. A body of intelligent, well-educated, liberalized landlords, scattered through New York, would have more effect in advancing the highest interests of the community than all the 'small potato' lawyers and governors you can name in a twelvemonth. What is more, this is just the state of society in which to reap all the benefits of such a class, without the evils of a real aristocracy. They are and would be without any particular political power, and there is no danger of corn-laws and exclusive legislation for their benefit. Rich and poor we *must* have; and let any fair-minded man say whether he wish a state of things in which the first shall have no

inducement to take an extended interest in real estate, and the last no chance to become agriculturists, except as hired labourers?"

"You do not mince matters, uncle Ro," put in Patt, "and will never go to Congress."

"That may be, my dear; but I shall retain my own self-respect by fair dealing. What I say, I *mean*, while many who take the other side do not. I say that, in a country like this, in which land is so abundant as to render the evils of a general monopoly impossible, a landed gentry is precisely what is most needed for the higher order of civilization, including manners, tastes, and the minor principles, and is the very class which, if reasonably maintained and properly regarded, would do the most good at the least risk of any social caste known. They *have* always existed in New York, though with a lessening influence, and are the reason, in my judgment, why we are so much before New England in particular things, while certainly behind that quarter of the country in many others that are dependent on ordinary schooling."

"I like to hear a person maintain his opinions frankly and manfully," said my grandmother; "and this have you done, Roger, from boyhood. My own family, on my father's side, was from

New England, and I subscribe to a great deal that you say: and particularly to the part that relates to the apathy of the public to this great wrong. It is now time, however, to go to the breakfast-table, as John has been bowing in the door, yonder, for the last minute or two."

To breakfast we went: and, notwithstanding incendiaries, anti-rentism, and canopies of pig-pens, a merry time we had of it. Henrietta Coldbrooke and Anne Marston never came out with more spirit, though in their several ways, than each did that morning. I believe I looked a little surprised, for I observed that my uncle stole occasional glances at me, that seemed to say—"there, my fine fellow, what do you think of that, now?" whenever either of his wards uttered anything that he fancied cleverer than common.

"Have you heard, ma'am," asked my uncle Ro of my grandmother, "that we are to have old Sus and Jaaf here at the Nest, and both in grand costume? It seems the red-men are about to depart, and there is to be smoking of pipes, and a great council, which the Trackless fancies will be more dignified if held in front of the house of his pale-face friends, than if held at his own hut."

"How did you ascertain that, Roger?"

"I have been at the wigwam, this morning, and have the fact directly from the Onondago, as well as from the interpreter, whom I met there. By the way, Hugh, we must shortly decide what is to be done with the prisoners, or we shall have writs of habeas corpus served on us, to know why we detain them."

"Is it possible, uncle Ro," for so his wards called him habitually—"to rescue a gentleman from the gallows by marrying him?" asked Henrietta Coldbrooke, demurely.

"That is so strange a question, that as a guardian I feel curious to hear its meaning."

"Tell—tell at once, Henrietta,"—said the other ward, urging her companion to speak. "I will save your blushes, and act as your interpreter. Miss Coldbrooke was honoured by Mr. Seneca Newcome with this letter, within the last twenty-four hours; and, it being a family matter, I think it ought to be referred to a family council."

"Nay, Anne," said the blushing Henrietta, "this is hardly fair—nor am I sure that it would be quite lady-like in me to suffer that letter to be generally known—*particularly* known to you, it certainly is, already."

"Perhaps your reluctance to have it read does not extend to me, Henrietta?" said my uncle.

"Certainly not, sir; nor to my dear Mrs. Littlepage, nor to Martha—though I confess that I cannot see what interest Mr. Hugh can have in the subject. Here it is; take it, and read it when you please."

My uncle was pleased to read it on the spot. As he proceeded, a frown collected on his brow, and he bit his lip, like one provoked as well as vexed. Then he laughed, and threw the letter on the table, where no one presumed to molest it. As Henrietta Coldbrooke was blushing all this time, though she laughed and seemed provoked, our curiosity was so great and manifest, that my grandmother felt an inclination to interfere.

"May not that letter be read aloud, for the benefit of all?" she asked.

"There can be no particular reason for concealing it," answered uncle Ro, spitefully. "The more it is known, the more the fellow will be laughed at, as he deserves to be."

"Will that be right, uncle Ro?" exclaimed Miss Coldbrooke, hastily. "Will it be treating a gentleman as he——"

"Pshaw!—it will not be treating a gentleman,

at all. The fellow is, at this moment, a prisoner for attempting to set an inhabited house on fire, in the middle of the night."

Henrietta said no more; and my grandmother took the letter, and read it for the common benefit. I shall not copy the effusion of Seneca, which was more cunning than philosophical; but it contained a strong profession of love, urged in a somewhat business manner, and a generous offer of his hand to the heiress of eight thousand a-year. And this proposal was made only a day or two before the fellow was "taken in the act," and at the very time he was the most deeply engaged in his schemes of anti-rentism.

"There is a class of men among us," said my uncle, after everybody had laughed at this magnificent offer, "who do not seem to entertain a single idea of the proprieties. How is it possible, or where could the chap have been bred, to fancy for an instant that a young woman of fortune and station, would marry *him*, and that, too, almost without an acquaintance! I dare say Henrietta never spoke to him ten times in her life."

"Not five, sir, and scarcely anything was said at either of those five."

"And you answered the letter, my dear?"

asked my grandmother. "An *answer* ought not to have been forgotten; though it might have properly come, in this case, from your guardian."

"I answered it myself, ma'am, not wishing to be laughed at for my part of the affair. I declined the honour of Mr. Seneca Newcome's hand."

"Well, if the truth *must* be said," put in Patt, drily, "*I* did the same thing, only three weeks since."

"And I, so lately as last week," added Anne Marston, demurely.

I do not know that I ever saw my uncle Ro so strangely affected. While everybody around him was laughing heartily, he looked grave, not to say fierce. Then he turned suddenly to me, and said—

"We must let him be hanged, Hugh. Were he to live a thousand years he would never learn the fitness of things."

"You'll think better of this, sir, and become more merciful. The man has only nobly dared. But I confess a strong desire to ascertain if Miss Warren alone has escaped his assaults."

Mary—pretty Mary—she blushed scarlet, but shook her head, and refused to give any answer.

We all saw that her feelings were not enlisted in the affair in any way; but there was evidently something of a more serious nature connected with Seneca's addresses to her than in connexion with his addresses to either of the others. As I have since ascertained, he really had a sort of affection for Mary; and I have been ready to pardon him the unprincipled and impudent manner in which he cast his flies towards the other fish, in consideration of his taste in this particular. But Mary herself would tell us nothing.

"You are not to think so much of this, Mr. Littlepage," she cried, so soon as a little recovered from her confusion, "since it is only acting on the great anti-rent principle, after all. In the one case, it is only a wish to get good farms cheap—and in the other, good wives."

"In the one case, other men's farms—and in the other, other men's wives."

"Other men's wives, certainly, if wives at all," said Patt, pointedly. "There is no Mr. *Seneky* Newcome there."

"We must let the law have its way, and the fellow be hanged!" rejoined my uncle. "I could overlook the attempt to burn the Nest House, but I cannot overlook this. Fellows of his

class get everything *dessus dessous*, and I do not wonder there is anti-rentism in the land. Such a matrimonial experiment could never have been attempted, as between such parties, in any region but one tainted with anti-rentism, or deluded by the devil."

"An Irishman would have included my grandmother in his cast of the net; that's the only difference, sir."

"Sure enough, why have you escaped, my dearest mother? You, who have a fair widow's portion, too."

"Because the suitor was not an Irishman, as Hugh intimated,—I know no other reason, Hodge. But a person so devoted to the ladies must not suffer in the cruel way you speak of. The wretch must be permitted to get off."

All the girls now joined with my grandmother in preferring this, to them, very natural petition; and, for a few minutes, we heard of nothing but regrets, and solicitations that Seneca might not be given up to the law. "Tender mercies of the law" might not be an unapt way to express the idea, as it is now almost certain that the bigger the rogue, the greater is the chance of escape.

"All this is very well, ladies; mighty

humane and feminine, and quite in character," answered my uncle; "but, in the first place, there is such a thing as compounding felony, and its consequences are not altogether agreeable; then, one is bound to consider the effect on society in general. Here is a fellow who first endeavours to raise a flame in the hearts of no less than four young ladies; failing of which, he takes refuge in lighting a fire in Hugh's kitchen. Do you know, I am almost as much disposed to punish him for the first of these offences as for the last?"

"There's a grand movement as is making among all the redskins, ma'am," said John, standing in the door of the breakfast parlour, "and I didn't know but the ladies, and Mr. Littlepage, and Mr. Hugh, would like to see it. Old Sus is on his way here, followed by Yop, who comes grumbling along after him, as if he didn't like the amusement any way at all."

"Have any arrangements been made for the proper reception of our guests this morning, Roger?"

"Yes, ma'am. At least I gave orders to have benches brought and placed under the trees, and plenty of tobacco provided. Smoking is a great part of a council, I believe, and we

shall be ready to commence at that as soon as they meet."

"Yes, sir, all is ready for 'em," resumed John. "Miller has sent an 'orse cart to bring the benches, and we've provided as much 'baccy as they can use. The servants 'opes, ma'am, they can have permission to witness the ceremony. It isn't often that civilised people *can* get a sight at real savages."

My grandmother gave an assent, and there was a general movement, preparatory to going on the lawn to witness the parting interview between the Trackless and his visitors.

"You have been very considerate, Miss Warren," I whispered Mary, as I helped her to put on her shawl, "in not betraying what I fancy is the most important of all Seneca's love secrets."

"I confess these letters have surprised me," the dear girl said thoughtfully, and with a look that seemed perplexed. "No one would be apt to think very favourably of Mr. Newcome; yet it was by no means necessary to complete his character, that one should think as ill as this."

I said no more,—but these few words, which appeared to escape Mary unconsciously, and

involuntarily, satisfied me that Senecca had been seriously endeavouring to obtain an interest in *her* heart, notwithstanding her poverty.

CHAPTER VII.

" And underneath that face like summer's dreams,
Its lips as moveless, and its cheek as clear,
Slumbers a whirlwind of the heart's emotions,
Love, hatred, pride, hope, sorrow—all save fear."

HALLECK.

THE only singularity connected with the great age of the Indian and the negro, was the fact that they should have been associates for near a century, and so long intimately united in adventures and friendship. I say, friendship, for the term was not at all unsuited to the feeling that connected these old men together, though they had so little in common, in the way of character. While the Indian possessed all the manly and high qualities of a warrior of the woods, of a chief, and of one who had never acknowledged a superior, the other was necessarily distinguished by many of the wickednesses of a state of servitude; the bitter conse-

quences of a degraded caste. Fortunately, both were temperate, by no means an every-day virtue among the red-men who dwelt with the whites, though much more so with the blacks. But Susquesus was born an Onondago, a tribe remarkable for its sobriety, and at no period of his long life would he taste any intoxicating drink, while Jaaf was essentially a sober man, though he had a thorough "nigger" relish for hard cider. There can be little doubt that these two aged memorials of past ages, and almost forgotten generations, owed their health and their strength to their temperance, fortifying natural predispositions to tenacity of life.

It was always thought Jaaf was a little the senior of the Indian, though the difference in their ages could not be great. It is certain that the red-man retained much the most of his bodily powers, though, for fifty years, he had taxed them the least. Susquesus never worked; never would work in the ordinary meaning of the term. He deemed it to be beneath his dignity as a warrior, and, I have heard it said, that nothing but necessity could have induced him to plant, or hoe, even when in his prime. So long as the boundless forest furnished the deer, the moose, the beaver, the bear, and the

other animals that it is usual for the red-man to convert into food, he had cared little for the fruits of the earth, beyond those that were found growing in their native state. His hunts were the last regular occupation that the old man abandoned. He carried the rifle, and threaded the woods with considerable vigour after he had seen a hundred winters; but the game deserted him, under the never-dying process of clearing acre after acre, until little of the native forest was left, with the exception of the reservation of my own, already named, and the pieces of woodland that are almost invariably attached to every American farm, lending to the landscape a relief, and beauty that are usually wanting to the views of older countries. It is this peculiarity which gives to many of the views of the republic, nay, it may be said to all of them, so much of the character of park-scenery when seen at a distance that excludes the blemishes of a want of finish, and the coarser appliances of husbandry.

With Jaaf, though he had imbibed a strong relish for the forest, and for forest-life, it was different in many respects. Accustomed to labour from childhood, *he* could not be kept from work, even by his extreme old age. He

had the hoe, or the axe, or the spade in his hand daily, many years after he could wield either to any material advantage. The little he did in this way, now, was not done to kill thought, for he never had any to kill; it was purely the effect of habit, and of a craving desire to be Jaaf still, and to act his life over again.

I am sorry to say that neither of these men had any essential knowledge, or any visible feeling for the truths of Christianity. A hundred years ago, little spiritual care was extended to the black, and the difficulty of making an impression, in this way, on the Indian, has become matter of history. Perhaps success best attends such efforts when the pious missionary can penetrate to the retired village, and disseminate his doctrines far from the miserable illustration of their effects, that is to be hourly traced, by the most casual observer, amid the haunts of civilized men. That Christianity does produce a deep and benign influence on our social condition cannot be doubted; but he who is only superficially acquainted with Christian nations, as they are called, and sets about tracing the effects of this influence, meets with so many proofs of a contrary nature, as to feel a strong disposition to doubt the truth of dogmas that

seem so impotent. It is quite likely such was the case with Susquesus, who had passed all the earlier years of his exclusive association with the pale-faces, on the flanks of armies, or among hunters, surveyors, runners, and scouts; situations that were not very likely to produce any high notions of moral culture. Nevertheless, many earnest and long-continued efforts had been made to awaken in this aged Indian some notions of the future state of a pale-face, and to persuade him to be baptized. My grandmother, in particular, had kept this end in view for quite half a century, but with no success. The different clergy, of all denominations, had paid more or less attention to this Indian, with the same object, though no visible results had followed their efforts. Among others, Mr. Warren had not overlooked this part of his duty, but he had met with no more success than those who had been before him. Singular as it seemed to some, though I saw nothing strange in it, Mary Warren had joined in this benevolent project with a gentle zeal, and affectionate and tender interest, that promised to achieve more than had been even hoped for these many years by her predecessors in the same kind office. Her

visits to the hut had been frequent, and I learned that morning from Patt, that, "though Mary herself never spoke on the subject, enough had been seen by others to leave no doubt that her gentle offices and prayers had, at last, touched, in some slight degree, the marble-like heart of the Trackless."

As for Jaaf, it is possible that it was his misfortune to be a slave in a family that belonged to the Episcopal Church, a sect that is so tempered and chastened in its religious rites, and so far removed from exaggeration, as often to seem cold to those who seek excitement, and fancy quiet and self-control incompatible with a lively faith. "Your priests are unsuited to make converts among the people," said an enthusiastic clergyman of another denomination to me, quite lately. "They cannot go among the brambles and thorns without tearing their gowns and surplices." There may be a certain degree of truth in this, though the obstacle exists rather with the convert than with the missionary. The vulgar love coarse excitement, and fancy that a profound spiritual sensibility must needs awaken a powerful physical sympathy. To such, groans, and sighs, and lamentations must be not

only audible to exist at all, but audible in a dramatic and striking form with men, in order to be groans, and sighs, and lamentations acceptable with God. It is certain, at any rate, that the practices which reason, education, a good taste, and a sound comprehension of Christian obligations condemn, are, if not *most* effective, still effective with the ignorant and coarse-minded. Thus may it have been with Jaaf, who had not fallen into the hands of the exaggerated during that period of life when he was most likely to be aroused by their practices, and who now really seemed to have lived beyond everything but the recollections connected with the persons and things he loved in youth.

As men, in the higher meaning of the term, the reader will remember that Susquesus was ever vastly the superior of the black. Jaaf's intellect had suffered under the blight which seems to have so generally caused the African mind to wither, as we know that mind among ourselves; while that of his associate had ever possessed much of the loftiness of a grand nature, left to its native workings by the impetus of an unrestrained, though savage liberty.

Such were the characters of the two extra-

ordinary men whom we now went forth to meet. By the time we reached the lawn, they were walking slowly towards the piazza, having got within the range of the shrubbery that immediately surrounds, and sheds its perfume on the house. The Indian led, as seemed to become his character and rank. But Jaaf had never presumed on his years and indulgences so far as to forget his condition. A slave he had been born, a slave had he lived, and a slave he would die. This, too, in spite of the law of emancipation, which had, in fact, liberated him long ere he had reached his hundredth year. I have been told that when my father announced to Jaaf the fact that he and all his progeny, the latter of which was very numerous, were free and at liberty to go and do as they pleased, the old black was greatly dissatisfied. "What good dat all do, Masser Malbone," he growled. "Whey 'ey won't let well alone? Nigger be nigger, and white gentle'em be white gentle'em. I 'speck, now, nuttin' but disgrace and poverty come on my breed! We alway *hab* been gentle'em's nigger, and why can't 'ey let us be gentle'em's nigger, as long as we like? Ole Sus hab liberty all he life, and what good he get? Nuttin' but poor red sabbage, for all dat,

and never be any t'ing more. If he could be gentle'em's sabbage, I tell him, *dat* war' somet'ing; but, no, he too proud for dat! Gcsh! so he only he own sabbage!"

The Onondago was in high costume; much higher even than when he first received the visit of the prairie Indians. The paint he used, gave new fire to eyes that age had certainly dimmed, though it had not extinguished their light; and fierce and savage as was the conceit, it unquestionably relieved the furrows of time. That red should be as much the favourite colour of the redskin is, perhaps, as natural as that our ladies should use cosmetics to imitate the lilies and roses that are wanting. A grim fierceness, however, was the aim of the Onondago; it being his ambition, at that moment, to stand before his guests in the colours of a warrior. Of the medals and wampum, and feathers, and blankets, and moccasins, gay with the quills of the porcupine, tinged half a dozen hues, and the tomahawk polished to the brightness of silver, it is not necessary to say anything. So much has been said, and written, and seen, of late, on such subjects, that almost every one now knows how the North American warrior appears, when he comes forth in his robes.

Nor had Jaaf neglected to do honour to a festival that was so peculiarly in honour of his friend. Grumble he would and did, throughout the whole of that day; but he was not the less mindful of the credit and honour of Susquesus. It is the fashion of the times to lament the disappearance of the red-men from among us; but, for my part, I feel much more disposed to mourn over the disappearance of the "nigger." I use the Doric, in place of the more modern and mincing term of "coloured man;" for the Doric alone will convey to the American the meaning in which I wish to be understood. I regret the "nigger;" the old-fashioned, careless, light-hearted, laborious, idle, roguish, honest, faithful, fraudulent, grumbling, dogmatical slave; who was at times good for nothing, and, again, the stay and support of many a family. But, him I regret in particular is the domestic slave, who identified himself with the interests, and most of all with the *credit* of those he served, and who always played the part of an humble privy counsellor, and sometimes that of a prime minister. It is true, I had never seen Jaaf acting in the latter capacity, among us; nor is it probable he ever did exactly discharge such functions with any of his old

masters; but, he was a much indulged servant always, and had become so completely associated with us, by not only long services, but by playing his part well and manfully in divers of the wild adventures that are apt to characterize the settlement of a new country, that we all of us thought of him rather as an humble and distant relative, than as a slave. Slave, indeed, he had not been for more than four-score years, his manumission-papers having been signed and regularly recorded as far back as that, though they remained a perfect dead letter, so far as the negro himself was concerned.

The costume of Yop Littlepage, as this black was familiarly called by all who knew anything of his existence, and his great age, as well as that of Susquesus, had got into more than one newspaper, was of what might be termed the old school of the "nigger!" The coat was scarlet, with buttons of mother-of-pearl, each as large as a half-dollar; his breeches were sky blue; the vest was green; the stockings striped blue and white, and the legs had no other peculiarities about them, than the facts that all that remained of the calves were on the shins, and that they were stepped nearer than is quite common to the centre of the foot; the heel-part

of the latter being about half as long as the part connected with the toes. The shoes, indeed, were somewhat conspicuous portions of the dress, having a length, and breadth, and proportions that might almost justify a naturalist in supposing that they were never intended for a human being. But, the head and hat, according to Jaaf's own notion, contained the real glories of his toilette and person. As for the last, it was actually laced, having formed a part of my grandfather, Gen. Cornelius Littlepage's uniform in the field, and the wool beneath it was as white as the snow of the hills. This style of dress has long disappeared from among the black race, as well as from among the whites; but vestiges of it were to be traced, my uncle tells me, in his boyhood; particularly at the pinkster holidays, that peculiar festival of the negro. Notwithstanding the incongruities of his attire, Yop Littlepage made a very respectable figure on this occasion, the great age of both him and the Onondago being the circumstance that accorded least with their magnificence.

Notwithstanding the habitual grumbling of the negro, the Indian always led when they made a movement. He had led in the forest, on the early hunts and on the war-paths; he

had led in their later excursions on the neighbouring hills; he always led when it was their wont to stroll to the hamlet together, to witness the militia musters and other similar striking events; he even was foremost when they paid their daily visits to the Nest; and, now, he came a little in advance, slow in movement, quiet, with lips compressed, eye roving and watchful, and far from dim, and his whole features wonderfully composed and noble, considering the great number of years he had seen. Jaaf followed at the same gait, but a very different man in demeanor and aspect. *His* face scarce seemed human, even the colour of his skin, once so glistening and black, having changed to a dirty grey, all its gloss having disappeared, while his lips were, perhaps, the most prominent feature. These, too, were in incessant motion, the old man working his jaws, in a sort of second childhood; or as the infant bites its gums to feel its nearly developed teeth, even when he was not keeping up the almost unceasing accompaniment of his grumbles.

As the old men walked towards us, and the men of the prairies had not yet shown themselves, we all advanced to meet the former. Every one of our party, the girls included,

shook hands with Susquesus, and wished him a good morning. He knew my grandmother, and betrayed some strong feeling, when he shook *her* hand. He knew Patt, and nodded kindly in answer to her good wishes. He knew Mary Warren, too, and held her hand a little time in his own, gazing at her wistfully the while. My uncle Ro and I were also recognised, his look at me being earnest and long. The two other girls were courteously received, but his feelings were little nterested in them. A chair was placed for Susquesus on the lawn, and he took his seat. As for Jaaf, he walked slowly up to the party, took off his fine cocked-hat, but respectfully refused the seat he too was offered. Happening thus to be the last saluted, he was the first with whom my grandmother opened the discourse.

"It is a pleasant sight, Jaaf, to see you, and our old friend Susquesus, once more on the lawn of the old house."

"Not so berry ole house, Miss Duss, a'ter all," answered the negro, in his grumbling way. "Remem'er him well 'noug'; only built tudder day."

"It has been built three-score years, if you call that the other day. I was then young myself; a bride—happy and blessed far beyond

my deserts. Alas! how changed have things become since that time!"

"Yes, you won'erful changed—must say *dat* for you, Miss Duss. I some time surprise myself so young a lady get change so berry soon."

"Ah! Jaaf, though it may seem a short time to you, who are so much my senior, four-score years are a heavy load to carry. I enjoy excellent health and spirits for my years; but age will assert its power."

"Remem'er you, Miss Duss, like dat young lady dere," pointing at Patt—"now you *do* seem won'erful change. Ole Sus, too, berry much alter of late—can't hole out much longer, I do t'ink. But Injin nebber hab much raal grit in 'em."

"And you, my friend," continued my grandmother, turning to Susquesus, who had sat motionless while she was speaking to Jaaf—"do you also see this great change in me? I have known you much longer than I have known Jaaf; and *your* recollection of me must go back nearly to childhood—to the time when I first lived in the woods, as a companion of my dear, excellent old uncle, Chainbearer."

"Why should Susquesus forget little wren? Hear song now in his ear. No change at all in little wren, in Susquesus' eye."

"This is at least gallant, and worthy of an Onondago chief. But, my worthy friend, age will make its mark even on the trees; and we cannot hope to escape for ever!"

"No; bark smooth on young tree—rough on ole tree. Nebber forget ChainBearer. He's same age as Susquesus — little ole'er, too. Brave warrior—good man. Know him when young hunter—he dere when *dat* happen."

"When *what* happened, Susquesus? I have long wished to know what drove you from your people; and why you, a red-man in your heart and habits, to the last, should have so long lived among us pale-faces, away from your own tribe. I can understand why you like *us*, and wish to pass the remainder of your days with this family; for I know all that we have gone through together, and your early connexion with my father-in-law, and *his* father-in-law, too; but the reason why you left your own people so young, and have now lived near a hundred years away from them, is what I could wish to hear, before the angel of death summons one of us away."

While my grandmother was thus coming to the point, for the first time in her life, on this subject, as she afterwards told me, the Onon-

dago's eye was never off her own. I thought he seemed surprised; then his look changed to sadness; and bowing his head a little, he sat a long time, apparently musing on the past. The subject had evidently aroused the strongest of the remaining feelings of the old man, and the allusion to it had brought back images of things long gone by, that were probably reviewed not altogether without pain. I think his head must have been bowed, and his face riveted on the ground, for quite a minute.

"Chainbearer nebber say why?" the old man suddenly asked, raising his face again to look at my grandmother. "Ole chief, too—he know; nebber talk of it, eh?"

"Never. I have heard both my uncle and my father-in-law say that they knew the reason why you left your people, so many long, long, years ago, and that it did you credit; but neither ever said more. It is reported here, that these red-men, who have come so far to see you, also know it, and that it is one reason of their coming so much out of their way to pay you a visit."

Susquesus listened attentively, though no portion of his person manifested emotion but his eyes. All the rest of the man seemed to

be made of some material that was totally without sensibility; but those restless, keen, still penetrating eyes opened a communication with the being within, and proved that the spirit was far younger than the tenement in which it dwelt. Still, he made no revelation; and our curiosity, which was getting to be intense, was completely baffled. It was even some little time before the Indian said anything more at all. When he did speak, it was merely to say—

"Good. Chainbearer wise chief — Gin'ral wise, too. Good in camp—good at council-fire. Know *when* to talk—know *what* to talk."

How much further my dear grandmother might have been disposed to push the subject, I cannot say, for just then, we saw the redskins coming out of their quarters, evidently about to cross from the old farm to the lawn, this being their last visit to the Trackless, preparatory to departing on their long journey to the prairies. Aware of all this, she fell back, and my uncle led Susquesus to the tree, where the benches were placed for the guests, I carrying the chair in the rear. Everybody followed, even to all the domestics who could be spared from the ordinary occupations of the household.

The Indian and the negro were both seated;

and chairs having been brought out for the members of the family, we took our places near by, though so much in the back-ground as not to appear obtrusive.

The Indians of the prairies arrrived in their customary marching order, or in single files. Many tongues led, followed by Prairiefire; Flinty-heart and Eaglesflight came next, and the rest succeeded in a nameless but perfect order. To our surprise, however, they brought the two prisoners with them, secured with savage ingenuity, and in a way to render escape nearly impossible.

It is unnecessary to dwell on the deportment of these strangers, as they took their allotted places on the benches, it being essentially the same as that described in their first visit. The same interest, however, was betrayed in their manner, nor did their curiosity or veneration appear to be in the least appeased, by having passed a day, or two, in the immediate vicinity of their subject. That this curiosity and veneration proceeded, in some measure, from the great age and extended experience of the Trackless was probable enough, but I could not divest myself of the idea that there lay something unusual behind all, which tradition had made

familiar to these sons of the soil, but which had become lost to us.

The American savage enjoys one great advantage over the civilized man of the same quarter of the world. His traditions ordinarily are true, whereas, the multiplied means of imparting intelligence among ourselves, has induced so many pretenders to throw themselves into the ranks of the wise and learned, that blessed, thrice blessed is he, whose mind escapes the contamination of falsehood and prejudice. Well would it be for men, if they oftener remembered that the very facilities that exist to circulate the truth, are just so many facilities for circulating falsehood; and that he who believes even one-half of that which meets his eyes, in his daily inquiries into passing events, is most apt to throw away quite a moiety of even that much credulity, on facts that either never had an existence at all, or, which have been so mutilated in the relation, that their eye-witnesses would be the last to recognise them.

The customary silence succeeded the arrival of the visitors; then Eaglesflight struck fire with a flint, touched the tobacco with the flame, and puffed at a very curiously carved pipe, made of some soft stone of the interior, until

he had lighted it beyond any risk of its soon becoming extinguished. This done, he rose, advanced with profound reverence in his air, and presented it to Susquesus, who took it and smoked for a few seconds, after which he returned it to him from whom it had been received. This was a signal for other pipes to be lighted, and one was offered to my uncle and myself, each of us making a puff or two; and even John and the other male domestics were not neglected. Prairiefire, himself, paid the compliment to Jaaf. The negro had noted what was passing, and was much disgusted with the niggardliness which required the pipe to be so soon returned. This he did not care to conceal, as was obvious by the crusty observation he made when the pipe was offered to him. Cider and tobacco had, from time immemorial, been the two great blessings of this black's existence, and he felt, at seeing one standing ready to receive his pipe, after a puff or two, much as he might have felt had one pulled the mug from his mouth, after the second or third swallow.

"No need wait here"—grumbled old Jaaf—"when I done, gib you de pipe, ag'in; nebber fear. Masser Corny, or Masser Malbone, or Masser Hugh—dear me, I nebber knows which be libbin'

and which be dead, I get so ole, now-a-day! But nebber mind if he be ole; can smoke yet, and don't lub Injin fashion of gibbin' t'ings; and dat is gib him and den take away, ag'in. Nigger is nigger, and Injin is Injin; and nigger best. Lord! how many years I *do* see—I do see—most get tire of libbin' so long. Don't wait, Injin; when I done, you get pipe again, I say. Best not make ole Jaaf *too* mad, or he dreadful!"

Although it is probable that Prairiefire did not understand one-half of the negro's words, he comprehended his wish to finish the tobacco, before he relinquished the pipe. This was against all rule, and a species of slight on Indian usages, but the red-man overlooked all, with the courtesy of one trained in high society, and walked away as composedly as if everything were right. In these particulars the high-breeding of an Indian is always made apparent. No one ever sees in his deportment, a shrug, or a half-concealed smile, or a look of intelligence; a wink or a nod, or any other of that class of signs, or communications, which it is usually deemed under-bred to resort to in company. In all things he is dignified and quiet, whether

it be the effect of coldness, or the result of character.

The smoking now became general, but only as a ceremony; no one but Jaaf setting to with regularity to finish his pipe. As for the black, his opinion of the superiority of his own race over that of the red-man, was as fixed as his consciousness of its inferiority to the white, and he would have thought the circumstance that the present mode of using tobacco was an Indian custom, a sufficient reason why he himself should not adopt it. The smoking did not last long, but was succeeded by a silent pause. Then Prairiefire arose and spoke.

"Father," he commenced, "we are about to quit you. Our squaws and papooses, on the prairies, wish to see us; it is time for us to go. They are looking towards the great salt lake for us; we are looking towards the great fresh-water lakes for them. There the sun sets—here it rises; the distance is great, and many strange tribes of pale-faces live along the path. Our journey has been one of peace. We have not hunted; we have taken no scalps; but we have seen our Great Father, Uncle Sam, and we have seen our Great Father, Susquesus; we

shall travel towards the setting sun satisfied.—Father, our traditions are true; they never lie. A lying tradition is worse than a lying Indian. What a lying Indian says, deceives his friends, his wife, his children; what a lying tradition says, deceives a tribe. Our traditions are true; they speak of the Upright Onondago. All the tribes on the prairies have heard this tradition, and are very glad. It is good to hear of justice; it is bad to hear of injustice. Without justice an Indian is no better than a wolf. No; there is not a tongue spoken on the prairies which does not tell of that pleasant tradition. We could not pass the wigwam of our father without turning aside to look at him. Our squaws and papooses wish to see us, but they would have told us to come back, and turn aside to look upon our father, had we forgotten to do so.—Why has my father seen so many winters? It is the will of the Manitou. The Great Spirit wants to keep him here a little longer. He is like stones piled together to tell the hunters where the pleasant path is to be found. All the red-men who see him think of what is right. No; the Great Spirit cannot yet spare my father from the earth, lest red-

men forget what is right. He is stones piled together."

Here Prairiefire ceased, sitting down amidst a low murmur of applause. He had expressed the common feeling, and met with the success usual to such efforts. Susquesus had heard and understood all that was said, and I could perceive that he felt it, though he betrayed less emotion on this occasion than he had done on the occasion of the previous interview. Then, the novelty of the scene, no doubt, contributed to influence his feelings. A pause followed this opening speech, and we were anxiously waiting for the renowned orator, Eaglesflight, to rise, when a singular and somewhat ludicrous interruption of the solemn dignity of the scene occurred. In the place of Eaglesflight, whom Manytongues had given us reason to expect would now come forth with energy and power, a much younger warrior arose and spoke, commanding the attention of his listeners in a way to show that he possessed their respect. We were told that this young warrior's name, rendered into English, was Deersfoot, an appellation obtained on account of his speed, and which we were assured he

well merited. Much to our surprise, however, he addressed himself to Jaaf, Indian courtesy requiring that something should be said to the constant friend and tried associate of the Trackless. The reader may be certain we were all much amused at this bit of homage, though every one of us felt some little concern on the subject of the answer it might elicit. Deersfoot delivered himself, substantially, as follows:—

"The Great Spirit sees all things; he makes all things. In his eyes, colour is nothing. Although he made children that he loved of a red colour, he made children that he loved with pale faces, too. He did not stop there. No; he said, 'I wish to see warriors and men with faces darker than the skin of the bear. I will have warriors who shall frighten their enemies by their countenances.' He made black men. My father is black; his skin is neither red, like the skin of Susquesus, nor white, like the skin of the young chief of Ravensnest. It is now grey, with having had the sun shine on it so many summers; but it was once the colour of the crow. Then it must have been pleasant to look at.—My black father is very old. They tell me he is even older than the Upright

Onondago. The Manitou must be well pleased with him, not to have called him away sooner. He has left him in his wigwam, that all the black men may see whom their Great Spirit loves.—This is the tradition told to us by our fathers. The pale men come from the rising sun, and were born before the heat burned their skins. The black men came from under the sun at noon-day, and their faces were darkened by looking up above their heads to admire the warmth that ripened their fruits. The red-men were born under the setting sun, and their faces were coloured by the hues of the evening skies. The red man was born here; the pale man was born across the salt lake; the black man came from a country of his own, where the sun is always above his head. What of that? We are brothers. The Thicklips (this was the name by which the strangers designated Jaaf, as we afterwards learned) is the friend of Susquesus. They have lived in the same wigwam, now, so many winters, that their venison and bear's-meat have the same taste. They love one another. Whomsoever Susquesus loves and honours, all just Indians love and honour. I have no more to say."

It is very certain that Jaaf would not have

understood a syllable that was uttered in this address, had not Manytongues first given him to understand that Deersfoot was talking to him in particular, and then translated the speaker's language, word for word, and with great deliberation, as each sentence was finished. Even this care might not have sufficed to make the negro sensible of what was going on, had not Patt gone to him, and told him in a manner and voice to which he was accustomed, to attend to what was said, and to endeavour, as soon as Deersfoot sat down, to say something in reply. Jaaf was so accustomed to my sister, and was so deeply impressed with the necessity of obeying her, as one of his many "y'ung misusses,"—*which* he scarcely knew himself,—that she succeeded in perfectly arousing him; and he astonished us all with the intelligence of his very characteristic answer, which he did not fail to deliver exactly as he had been directed to do. Previously to beginning to speak, the negro champed his toothless gums together, like a vexed swine; but "y'ung misus" had told him he *must* answer, and answer he *did*. It is probable, also, that the old fellow had some sort of recollection of such scenes, having been present, in his younger days, at

various councils held by the different tribes of New York; among whom my grandfather, Gen. Mordaunt Littlepage, had more than once been a commissioner.

"Well," Jaaf began, in a short, snappish manner, "s'pose nigger *must* say somet'in'. No berry great talker, 'cause I no Injin. Nigger hab too much work to do, to talk all 'e time. What you say 'bout where nigger come from, isn't true. He come from Africa, as I hear 'em say, 'long time ago. Ahs, me! how ole I do get! Sometime I t'ink poor ole black man be nebber to lie down and rest himself. It *do* seem dat ebberybody take his rest but old Sus and me. I berry strong, yet; and git stronger and stronger, dough won'erful tired; but Sus, he git weaker and weaker ebbery day. Can't last long, now, poor Sus! Ebberybody *must* die, sometime. Ole, ole, ole Masser and Missus, fust dey die. Den Masser Corny go; putty well adwanced, too. Den come Masser Mordaunt's turn, and Masser Malbone, and now dere anudder Masser Hugh. Well, dey putty much all de sames to me. I lubs 'em all, and all on 'em lubs me. Den Miss Dus count for somet'in', but she be libbin', yet. Most time she die, too, but don't seem to go. Ahs, me!

how ole I *do* git! Ha! dere comes dem debbils of Injins, ag'in, and dis time we *must* clean 'em out! Get your rifle, Sus; get your rifle, boy, and mind dat ole Jaaf be at your elbow."

Sure enough, there the Injins *did* come; but I must reserve an account of what followed for the commencement of another chapter.

CHAPTER VIII.

"Hope—that thy wrongs will be by the Great Spirit
Remember'd and revenged when thou art gone;
Sorrow—that none are left thee to inherit
Thy name, thy fame, thy passions, and thy throne."

RED JACKET.

IT was a little remarkable that one as old and blear-eyed as the negro, should be the first among us to discover the approach of a large body of the Injins, who could not be less than two hundred in number. The circumstance was probably owing to the fact that, while every other eye was riveted on the speaker, his eyes were fastened on nothing. There the Injins did come, however, in force; and this time, apparently, without fear. The white American meets the red-man with much confidence, when he is prepared for the struggle; and the result has shown that, when thrown upon his resources, in the wilderness, and after he has been allowed

time to gain a little experience, he is usually the most formidable enemy. But a dozen Indians, of the stamp of those who had here come to visit us, armed and painted, and placed in the centre of one of our largest peopled counties, would be sufficient to throw that county into a paroxysm of fear. Until time were given for thought, and the opinions of the judicious superseded the effects of rumour, nothing but panic would prevail. Mothers would clasp their children to their bosoms, fathers would hold back their sons from the slaughter, and even the heroes of the militia would momentarily forget their ardour in the suggestions of prudence and forethought.

Such, in fact, had been the state of things in and about Ravensnest, when Flintyheart so unexpectedly led his companions into the forest, and dispersed the virtuous and oppressed tenants of my estate on their return from a meeting held with but one virtuous object, viz., that of transferring the fee of the farms they occupied, from me to themselves. No one doubted, at the moment, that in addition to the other enormities committed by me and mine, I had obtained a body of savages from the far West, to meet the forces already levied by the tenants,

on a principle that it would not do to examine very clearly. If I *had* done so, I am far from certain that I should not have been perfectly justified in morals; for an evil of that nature, that might at any time be put down in a month, and which is suffered to exist for years, through the selfish indifference of the community, restores to every man his natural rights of self-defence; though I make no doubt, had I resorted to such means, I should have been hanged, without benefit of philanthropists; the "clergy" in this country not being included in the class, so far as suspension by the neck is concerned.

But the panic had disappeared, as soon as the truth became known concerning the true object of the visit of the redskins. The courage of the "virtuous and honest" revived, and one of the first exhibitions of this renewed spirit was the attempt to set fire to my house and barns. So serious a demonstration, it was thought, would convince me of the real power of the people, and satisfy us all that their wishes are not to be resisted with impunity. As no one likes to have his house and barns burned, it must be a singular being who could withstand the influence of such a manifestation of the "spirit of the Institutions;" for it is just

as reasonable to suppose that the attempts of the incendiaries came within their political category, as it is to suppose that the attempt of the tenants to get a title beyond what was bestowed in their leases, was owing to this cause.

That habit of deferring to externals, which is so general in a certain class of our citizens, and which endures in matters of religion long after the vital principle is forgotten, prevented any serious outbreak on the next day, which was the Sunday mentioned; though the occasion was improved to coerce by intimidation, the meeting and resolutions having been regularly digested in secret conclave, among the local leaders of anti-rentism, and carried out, as has been described. Then followed the destruction of the canopy, another demonstration of the "spirit of the Institutions," and as good an argument as any that has yet been offered in favour of the dogmas of the new political faith. Public opinion is entitled to some relief, surely, when it betrays so much excitement as to desecrate churches, and to destroy private property. This circumstance of the canopy had been much dwelt on, as a

favourite anti-rent argument, and it might now be considered that the subject was carried out to demonstration.

By the time all this was effected, so completely had the "Injins" got over their dread of the Indians, that it was with difficulty the leaders of the former could prevent the most heroic portion of their corps from following their blow at the canopy by a *coup de main* against the old farm-house, and its occupants. Had not the discretion of the leaders been greater than that of their subordinates, it is very probable blood would have been shed between these quasi belligerents. But the warriors of the Prairies were the guests of Uncle Sam, and the old gentleman, after all, has a long arm, and can extend it from Washington to Ravensnest without much effort. He was not to be offended heedlessly, therefore; for his power was especially to be dreaded in this matter of the covenants, without which Injins and agitation would be altogether unnecessary to attaining the great object, the Albany politicians being so well disposed to do all they can for the "virtuous and honest." Uncle Sam's Indians, consequently, were held

a good deal more in respect than the laws of the State, and they consequently escaped being murdered in their sleep.

When Jaaf first drew attention to the Injins, they were advancing, in a long line, by the highway, and at a moderate pace; leaving us time to shift our own position, did we deem it necessary. My uncle was of opinion it would never do to remain out on the lawn, exposed to so great a superiority of force, and he took his measures accordingly. In the first place, the females, mistresses and maids—and there were eight or ten of the last—were requested to retire, at once, to the house. The latter, with John at their head, were directed to close all the lower, outside shutters of the building, and secure them within. This done, and the gate and two outer doors fastened, it would not be altogether without hazard to make an assault on our fortress. As no one required a second request to move, this part of the precautions was soon effected, and the house placed in a species of temporary security.

While the foregoing was in the course of execution, Susquesus and Jaaf were induced to change their positions, by transferring themselves to the piazza. That change was made,

and the two old fellows were comfortably seated in their chairs again, before a single man of the redskins moved a foot. There they all remained, motionless as so many statues, with the exception that Flintyheart seemed to be reconnoitring with his eyes, the thicket that fringed the neighbouring ravine, and which formed a bit of dense cover, as already described, of some considerable extent.

"Do you wish the redskins in the house, Colonel?" asked the interpreter, coolly, when matters had reached to this pass; "if you do, it's time to speak, or, they'll soon be off, like a flock of pigeons, into that cover. There'll be a fight as sartain as they move, for there's no more joke and making of faces about them critturs, than there is about a mile-stone. So, it's best to speak in time."

No delay occurred after this hint was given. The request of my uncle Ro that the chiefs would follow the Upright Onondago, was just in time to prevent a flight; in the sense of Manytongues, I mean, for it was not very likely hese warriors would literally run away. It is probable that they would have preferred the cover of the woods as more natural and familiar to them,—but, I remarked, as the whole party

came on the piazza, that Flintyheart, in particular, cast a quick, scrutinizing glance at the house, which said in pretty plain language that he was examining its capabilities as a work of defence. The movement, however, was made with perfect steadiness; and, what most surprised us all, was the fact that not one of the chiefs appeared to pay the slightest attention to their advancing foes; or, men whom it was reasonable for them to suppose so considered themselves to be. We imputed this extraordinary reserve to force of character, and a desire to maintain a calm and dignified deportment in the presence of Susquesus. If it were really the latter motive that so completely restrained every exhibition of impatience, apprehension, or disquietude, they had every reason to congratulate themselves on the entire success of their characteristic restraint on their feelings.

The Injins were just appearing on the lawn as our arrangements were completed. John had come to report every shutter secure, and the gate and little door barred. He also informed us that all the men and boys who could be mustered, including gardeners, labourers, and stable people, to the number of five or six, were in the little passage, armed; where rifles were

ready also for ourselves. In short, the preparations that had been made by my grandmother, immediately after her arrival, were now of use, and enabled us to make a much more formidable resistance, sustained as we were by the party from the Prairies, than I could have ever hoped for on so sudden an emergency.

Our arrangement was very simple. The ladies were seated near the great door, in order that they might be placed under cover the first, in the event of necessity; Susquesus and Jaaf had their chairs a little on one side, but quite near this group, and the men from the far West occupied the opposite end of the piazza, whither the benches had been removed, for their accommodation. Manytongues stood between the two divisions of our company, ready to interpret for either; while my uncle, myself, John, and two or three of the other servants took position behind our aged friends. Seneca and his fellow-incendiary were in the midst of the chiefs.

It was just as the Injins had got fairly on the lawn that we heard the clattering of hoofs, and every eye was turned in the direction whence the sound proceeded. This was on the side of the ravine, and to me it seemed from the first that some one was approaching us through that

dell. So it proved, truly; for soon Opportunity came galloping up the path, and appeared in sight. She did not check her horse until under the tree, where she alighted, by a single bound, and hitching the animal to a hook in the tree, she moved swiftly towards the house. My sister Patt advanced to the steps of the piazza to receive this unexpected guest, and I was just behind her to make my bow. But the salutations of Opportunity were hasty and far from being very composed. She glanced around her, ascertained the precise condition of her brother, and, taking my arm, she led me into the library with very little, or, indeed, with no ceremony; for, to give this young woman her due, she was a person of great energy when there was anything serious to be done. The only sign of deviating, in the slightest degree, from the object in view, was pausing one instant, in passing, to make her compliments to my grandmother.

"What, in the name of wonder, do you mean to do with Sen?" demanded this active young lady, looking at me intently, with an expression half-hostile, half-tender. "You are standing over an earthquake, Mr. Hugh, if you did but know it."

Opportunity had confounded the effect with the cause, but that was of little moment on an occasion so interesting. She was much in earnest, and I had learned by experience that her hints and advice might be of great service to us at the Nest.

"To what particular danger do you allude, my dear Opportunity?"

"Ah, Hugh! if things was only as they used to be, how happy might we all be together here at Ravensnest! But, there is no time to talk of such things; for, as Sarah Soothings says, 'the heart is most monopolized when grief is the profoundest, and it is only when our sentiments rise freely to the surface of the imagination, that the mind escapes the shackles of thraldom.' But, I haven't a minute for Sarah Soothings, even, just now. Don't you see the Injins?"

"Quite plainly; and they probably see my 'Indians.'"

"Oh! they don't regard them now the least in the world. At first, when they thought you might have hired a set of desperate wretches to scalp the folks, there was some misgivings; but the whole story is now known, and nobody cares a straw about them. If anybody's scalp is

taken, 't will be their own. Why, the whole country is up, and the report has gone forth, far and near, that you have brought in with you a set of bloodthirsty savages from the prairies to cut the throats of women and children, and drive off the tenants, that you may get all the farms into your own hands before the lives fall in. Some folks say, these savages have had a list of all the lives named in your leases given to them, and that they are to make way with all such people first, that you may have the law as much as possible on your side. You stand on an earthquake, Mr. Hugh;—you do, indeed!"

"My dear Opportunity," I answered, laughing, "I am infinitely obliged to you for all this attention to my interests, and freely own that on Saturday night you were of great service to me; but I must now think that you magnify the danger—that you colour the picture too high."

"Not in the least. I do protest, you stand on an earthquake; and, as your friend, I have ridden over here to tell you as much, while there is yet time."

"To get off it, I suppose you mean. But how can all these evil and bloodthirsty reports be abroad, when the characters of the Western

Indians are, as you own yourself, understood, and the dread of them that did exist in the town has entirely vanished! There is a contradiction in this."

"Why, you know how it is, in anti-rent times. When an excitement is needed, folks don't stick at facts very closely, but repeat things, and make things, just as it happens to be convenient."

"True; I can understand this, and have no difficulty in believing you now. But have you come here this morning simply to let me know the danger which besets me from this quarter?"

"I believe I'm always only too ready to gallop over to the Nest! But everybody has some weakness or other, and I suppose I am to be no exception to the rule," returned Opportunity, who doubtless fancied the moment propitious to throw in a volley towards achieving her great conquest, and who reinforced that volley of words with such a glance of the eye, as none but a most practised picaroon on the sea of flirtation could have thrown. "But, Hugh—I call you Hugh, Mr. Littlepage, for you seem more like Hugh to me, than like the proud, evil-minded aristocrat, and hard-hearted landlord, that folks want to make you out to be—

but I never could have told you what I did last night, had I supposed it would bring Sen into this difficulty."

"I can very well understand how unpleasantly you are situated as respects your brother, Opportunity, and your friendly services will not be forgotten in the management of his affairs."

"If you are of this mind, why won't you suffer these Injins to get him out of the hands of your real savages," returned Opportunity, coaxingly. "I'll promise for him, that Sen will go off, and stay off for some months, if you insist on't; when all is forgotten, he can come back again."

"Is the release of your brother, then, the object of this visit from the Injins?"

"Partly so—they're bent on having him. He's in all the secrets of the anti-renters, and they're afraid for their very lives, so long as he's in your hands. Should he get a little scared, and give up only one-quarter of what he knows, there'd be no peace in the county for a twelvemonth."

At this instant, and before there was time to make an answer, I was summoned to the piazza, the Injins approaching so near as to induce my

uncle to step to the door and call my name in a loud voice. I was compelled to quit Opportunity, who did not deem it prudent to show herself among us, though her presence in the house, as an intercessor for her brother, could excite neither surprise nor resentment.

When I reached the piazza, the Injins had advanced as far as the tree where we had first been posted, and there they had halted, seemingly for a conference. In their rear, Mr. Warren was walking hurriedly towards us, keeping the direct line, regardless of those whom he well knew to be inimical to him, and intent only on reaching the house before it could be gained by the "disguised and armed." This little circumstance gave rise to an incident of touching interest, and which I cannot refrain from relating, though it may interrupt the narration of matters that others may possibly think of more moment.

Mr. Warren did not pass directly through the crowd of rioters—for such those people were, in effect, unless the epithet should be changed to the still more serious one of rebels —but he made a little *détour*, in order to prevent a collision that was unnecessary. When about half-way between the tree and the piazza,

however, the Injins gave a discordant yell, and many of them sprang forward, as if in haste to overtake, and probably to arrest him. Just as we all involuntarily arose, under a common feeling of interest in the fate of the good rector, Mary darted from the piazza, was at her father's side and in his arms so quickly, as to seem to have flown there. Clinging to his side, she appeared to urge him towards us. But Mr. Warren adopted a course much wiser than that of flight would have been. Conscious of having said or done no more than his duty, he stopped and faced his pursuers. The act of Mary Warren had produced a check to the intended proceedings of these lawless men, and the calm, dignified aspect of the divine completed his conquest. The leaders of the Injins paused, conferred together, when all, who had issued from the main body returned to their companions beneath the tree, leaving Mr. Warren and his charming daughter at liberty to join us unmolested, and with decorum.

The instant Mary Warren left the piazza on her pious errand, I sprang forward to follow her with an impulse I could not control. Although my own power over this impulsive movement was so small, that of my uncle and

grandmother was greater. The former seized the skirt of my frock, and held me back by main strength, while the light touch of the latter had even greater power. Both remonstrated, and with so much obvious justice, that I saw the folly of what I was about in an instant, and abandoned my design. Had I fallen into the hands of the anti-renters, their momentary triumph, at least, would have been complete.

Mr. Warren ascended the steps of the piazza with a mien as unaltered, and an air as undisturbed, as if about to enter his own church. The good old gentleman had so schooled his feelings, and was so much accustomed to view himself as especially protected, or as so ready to suffer, when in the discharge of any serious duty, that I have had occasions to ascertain fear was unknown to him. As for Mary, never had she appeared so truly lovely, as she ascended the steps, still clinging fondly and confidingly to his arm. The excitement of such a scene had brought more than the usual quantity of blood into her face, and the brilliancy of her eyes was augmented by that circumstance, perhaps; but I fancied that a more charming picture of feminine softness, blended with the

self-devotion of the child, could not have been imagined by the mind of man.

Patt, dear, generous girl, sprang forward to embrace her friend, which she did with warmth and honest fervour, and my venerable grandmother kissed her on both cheeks, while the other two girls were not backward in giving the customary signs of the sympathy of their sex. My uncle Ro even went so far as gallantly to kiss her hand, causing the poor girl's face to be suffused with blushes, while poor Hugh was obliged to keep in the background, and content himself with looking his admiration. I got one glance, however, from the sweet creature, that was replete with consolation, since it assured me that my forbearance was understood, and attributed to its right motive.

In that singular scene, the men of the prairies alone appeared to be unmoved. Even the domestics and workmen had betrayed a powerful interest in this generous act of Mary Warren's, the females all screaming in chorus, very much as a matter of course. But, not an Indian moved. Scarce one turned his eyes from the countenance of Susquesus, though all must have been conscious that something of interest was going on so near them, by the concern we

betrayed; and all certainly knew that their enemies were hard by. As respects the last, I have supposed the unconcern, or seeming unconcern of these western warriors, ought to be ascribed to the circumstance of the presence of the ladies, and an impression that there could be no very imminent risk of hostilities while the company then present remained together. The apathy of the chiefs seemed to be extended to the interpreter, who was coolly lighting his pipe at the very moment when the whole affair of the Warren episode occurred; an occupation that was not interrupted by the clamour and confusion among ourselves.

As there was a delay in the nearer approach of the Injins, there was leisure to confer together for a moment. Mr. Warren told us, therefore, that he had seen the "disguised and armed" pass the rectory, and had followed in order to act as a mediator between us and any contemplated harm.

"The destruction of the canopy of Hugh's pew, must have given you a serious intimation that things were coming to a head," observed my grandmother.

Mr. Warren had not heard of the affair of the canopy, at all. Although living quite within

sound of a hammer used in the church, everything had been conducted with so much management, that the canopy had been taken down, and removed bodily, without any one in the rectory's knowing the fact. The latter had become known at the Nest, solely by the circumstance that the object which had so lately canopied aristocracy in St. Andrew's, Ravensnest, was now canopying pigs up at the farm-house. The good divine expressed his surprise a little strongly, and, as I thought, his regrets a little indifferently. He was not one to countenance illegality and violence, and least of all that peculiarly American vice, envy; but, on the other hand, he was not one to look with favour on the empty distinctions, as set up between men equally sinners and in need of grace to redeem them from a common condemnation, in the house of God. As the grave is known to be the great leveller of the human race, so ought the church to be used as a preparatory step in descending to the plain that all must occupy, in spirit at least, before they can hope to be elevated to any, even of the meanest places, among the many mansions of our Father's house!

There was but a short breathing time given us, however, before the Injins again advanced.

It was soon evident they did not mean to remain mere idle spectators of the scene that was in the course of enactment on the piazza, but that it was their intention to become actors, in some mode or other. Forming themselves into a line, that savoured a great deal more of the militia of this great republic than of the warriors of the West, they came on tramping, with the design of striking terror into our souls. Our arrangements were made, however, and on our part every thing was conducted just as one could have wished. The ladies, influenced by my grandmother, retained their seats, near the door; the men of the household were standing, but continued stationary, while not an Indian stirred. As for Susquesus, he had lived far beyond surprises and all emotions of the lower class, and the men of the prairies appeared to take their cues from him. So long as he continued immovable, they seemed disposed to remain immovable also.

The distance between the tree and the piazza, did not much exceed a hundred yards, and little time was necessary to march across it. I remarked, however, that, contrary to the laws of attraction, the nearer the Injins' line got to its goal, the slower and more unsteady its move-

ment became. It also lost its formation, bending into curves, though its tramps became louder and louder, as if those who were in it, wished to keep alive their own courage by noise. When within fifty feet of the steps, they ceased to advance at all, merely stamping with their feet, as if hoping to frighten us into flight. I thought this a favourable moment to do that which it had been decided between my uncle and myself ought to be done by me, as owner of the property these lawless men had thus invaded. Stepping to the front of the piazza, I made a sign for attention. The tramping ceased all at once, and I had a profound silence for my speech.

"You know me, all of you," I said, quietly I know, and I trust firmly; "and you know, therefore, that I am the owner of this house and these lands. As such owner, I order every man among you to quit the place, and go into the highway, or upon the property of some other person. Whoever remains, after this notice, will be a trespasser, and the evil done by a trespasser is doubly serious in the eyes of the law."

I uttered these words loud enough to be heard by everybody present, but I cannot pretend that they were attended by much success.

The calico bundles turned towards each other, and there was an appearance of a sort of commotion, but the leaders composed the people, the omnipotent people in this instance, as they do in most others. The sovereignty of the mass is a capital thing as a principle, and once in a long while it evinces a great good in practice; in a certain sense, it is always working good, by holding a particular class of most odious and intolerable abuses in check; but, as for the practice of every-day political management, their imperial majesties, the sovereigns of America, of whom I happen to be one, have quite as little connexion with the measures they are made to seem to demand, and to sustain, as the Nawab of Oude; if the English, who are so disinterested as to feel a generous concern for the rights of mankind, whenever the great republic adds a few acres to the small paternal homestead, have left any such potentate in existence.

So it was with the decision of the "disguised and armed," on the occasion I am describing. They decided that no other notice should be taken of my summons to quit, than a contemptuous yell, though they had to ascertain from their leaders what they had decided before

they knew themselves. The shout was pretty general, notwithstanding, and it had one good effect; that of satisfying the Injins, themselves, that they had made a clear demonstration of their contempt of my authority, which they fancied victory sufficient for the moment; nevertheless, the demonstration did not end exactly here. Certain cries, and a brief dialogue, succeeded, which it may be well to record.

"*King* Littlepage," called out one, from among the "disguised and armed," "what has become of your throne? St. Andrew's meeting-'us' has lost its monarch's throne!"

"His pigs have set up for great aristocrats of late; presently they'll want to be patroons."

"Hugh Littlepage, be a man; come down to a level with your fellow-citizens, and don't think yourself any better than other folks. You 're but flesh and blood a'ter all."

"Why don't you invite me to come and dine with you, as well as priest Warren? I can eat, as well as any man in the county, and as much."

"Yes, and he'll *drink*, too, Hugh Littlepage; so provide your best liquor the day he's to be invited."

All this passed for wit among the Injins, and among that portion of the "virtuous and honest and hard-working," who not only kept them on foot, but on this occasion kept them company also; it having since been ascertained that about one-half of that band was actually composed of the tenants of the Ravensnest farms. I endeavoured to keep myself cool, and succeeded pretty well, considering the inducements there were to be angry. Argument with such men was out of the question,—and knowing their numbers and physical superiority, they held my legal rights in contempt. What was probably worse than all, they knew that the law itself was administered by the people, and that they had little to apprehend, and did apprehend virtually nothing from any of the pains and penalties it might undertake to inflict, should recourse be had to it at any future day. Ten or a dozen wily agents sent through the country to circulate lies, and to visit the county town previously to, and during a trial, in order to raise a party that will act more or less directly on the minds of the jurors, with a newspaper or two to scatter untruths and prejudices, would at least be as effective, at the critical moment, as the law, the evidence, and

the right. As for the judges, and their charges, they have lost most of their influence, under the operation of this nefarious system, and count but for very little in the administration of justice, either at Nisi Prius or at Oyer Terminer. These are melancholy truths, that any man who quits his theories and descends into the arena of practice will soon ascertain to be such, to his wonder and alarm, if he be a novice and an honest man. A portion of this unhappy state of things is a consequence of the legislative tinkering that has destroyed one of the most healthful provisions of the common law, in prohibiting the judges to punish for contempt, unless for outrages committed in open court. The press, in particular, now profits by this impunity, and influences the decision of nearly every case that can at all enlist public feeling. All these things men feel, and few who are wrong care for the law; for those who are right, it is true, there is still some danger. My uncle Ro says America is no more like what America was in this respect twenty years since, than Kamtschatka is like Italy. For myself, I wish to state the truth; exaggerating nothing, nor yet taking refuge in a dastardly concealment.

Unwilling to be browbeaten on the threshold of my own door, I determined to say something ere I returned to my place. Men like these before me can never understand that silence proceeds from contempt; and I fancied it best to make some sort of a reply to the speeches I have recorded, and to twenty more of the same moral calibre. Motioning for silence, I again obtained it.

"I have ordered you to quit my lawn, in the character of its owner," I said, "and, by remaining, you make yourselves trespassers. As for what you have done to my pew, I should thank you for it, had it not been done in violation of the right; for it was fully my intention to have that canopy removed as soon as the feeling about it had subsided. I am as much opposed to distinctions of any sort in the house of God as any of you can be, and desire them not for myself, or any belonging to me. I ask for nothing but equal rights with all my fellow-citizens; that *my* property should be as much protected as *theirs*, but not more so. But, I do not conceive that you or any man has a right to ask to share in my world's goods any more than I have a right to ask to share in his; that you can more justly claim a portion of my lands

than I can claim a share in your cattle and crops. It is a poor rule that does not work both ways."

"You're an aristocrat," cried one from among the Injins, "or you'd be willing to let other men have as much land as you've got yourself. You're a patroon; and all patroons are aristocrats, and hateful."

"An aristocrat," I answered, "is one of a few who wield political power. The highest birth, the largest fortune, the most exclusive association would not make an aristocrat, without the addition of a narrow political power. In this country there are no aristocrats, because there is no narrow political power. There is, however, a spurious aristocracy, which you do not recognise, merely because it does not happen to be in the hands of gentlemen. Demagogues and editors are your privileged classes, and consequently your aristocrats, and none others. As for your landlord aristocrats, listen to a true tale, which will satisfy you how far they deserve to be called an aristocracy. Mark! what I now tell you is religious truth, and it deserves to be known, far and near, wherever your cry of aristocracy reaches. There is a landlord in this State, a man of large means, who became liable

for the debts of another to a considerable amount. At the very moment when *his* rents could not be collected, owing to *your* interference and the remissness of those in authority to enforce the laws, the sheriff entered *his* house, and sold its contents, in order to satisfy an execution against *him!* There is American aristocracy for you, and I am sorry to add American justice, as justice has got to be administered among us."

I was not disappointed in the effect of this narration of what is a sober truth. Wherever I have told it, it has confounded even the most brawling demagogue, and momentarily revived in his breast some of those principles of right which God originally planted there. American aristocracy, in sooth! Fortunate is the gentleman that can obtain even a reluctant and meagre justice.

CHAPTER IX.

" How far that little candle throws his beams;
So shines a good deed in a naughty world."
SHAKSPEARE.

I HAVE said that my narrative of the manner in which justice is sometimes meted out among us was not without its effect on even that rude band of selfish and envious rioters: rude, because setting at naught reason and the law; and selfish, because induced so to do by covetousness, and the desire to substitute the tenants for those whom they fancied to be better off in the world than they were themselves. A profound stillness succeeded; and after the bundles of calico had whispered one with another for a moment or two, they remained quiet, seemingly indisposed, just then, at least, to molest us any farther. I thought the moment favourable, and fell back to my old station, de-

termined to let things take their own course. This change, and the profound stillness that succeeded, brought matters back to the visit of the Indians and its object.

During the whole time occupied by the advance of the "Injins," the men of the prairies and Susquesus had continued nearly as motionless as so many statues. It is true that the eyes of Flintyheart were on the invaders; but he managed to take good heed of them without betraying any undue uneasiness or care. Beyond this, I do affirm that I scarce noted a sign of even vigilance among these extraordinary beings; though Manytongues afterwards gave me to understand that they knew very well what they were about; and then I could not be watching the red-men the whole time. Now that there was a pause, however, every body and thing seemed to revert to the original visit, as naturally as if no interruption had occurred. Manytongues, by way of securing attention, called on the Injins, in an authoritative voice, to offer no interruption to the proceedings of the chiefs, which had a species of religious sanctity, and was not to be too much interfered with, with impunity.

"So long as you keep quiet, my warriors will

not molest you," he added; "but if any man amongst you has ever been on the prer-ies, he must understand enough of the natur' of a red-skin to know that when he's in 'airnest he *is* in 'airnest. Men who are on a journey three thousand miles in length, don't turn aside for trifles, which is a sign that serious business has brought these chiefs here."

Whether it was that this admonition produced an effect, or that curiosity influenced the "disguised and armed," or that they did not choose to proceed to extremities, or that all three considerations had their weight, is more than I can say; but it is certain the whole band remained stationary, quiet and interested observers of what now occurred, until an interruption took place, which will be related in proper time. Manytongues, who had posted himself near the centre of the piazza, to interpret, now signified to the chiefs that they might pursue their own purposes in tranquillity. After a decent pause, the same young warrior who had "called up" Jaaf, in the first instance, now rose again, and with a refinement in politeness that would be looked for in vain in most of the deliberative bodies of civilized men, adverted to the circumstance that the negro had not

finished his address, and might have matter on his mind of which he wished to be delivered. This was said simply, but distinctly; and it was explained to the negro by Manytongues, who assured him not one among all the chiefs would say a word until the last person "on his legs" had an opportunity of finishing his address. This reserve marks the deportment of those whom we call savages; men that have their own fierce, and even ruthless customs, beyond all controversy, but who possess certain other excellent qualities that do not appear to flourish in the civilized state.

It was with a good deal of difficulty that we got old Jaaf up again; for, though a famous grumbler, he was not much of an orator. As it was understood that no chief would speak, however, until the black had exhausted his right, my dear Patt had to go; and, laying one of her ivory-looking hands on the shoulder of the grim old negro, persuaded him to rise and finish his speech. He knew her, and she succeeded; it being worthy of remark, that while this aged black scarce remembered for an hour what occurred, confounding dates fearfully, often speaking of my grandmother as Miss Duss, and as if she were still a girl, he

knew every one of the family then living, and honoured and loved us accordingly, at the very moments he would fancy we had been present at scenes that occurred when our great-grand-parents were young people. But to the speech—

"What all dem fellow want, bundle up in calico, like so many squaw?" growled out Jaaf, as soon as on his legs, and looking intently at the Injins, ranged as they were in a line four deep, quite near the piazza. "Why you let 'em come, Masser Hugh, Masser Hodge, Masser Malbone, Masser Mordant—which you be here, now, I don't know, dere so many, and it so hard to 'member ebbery t'ing? Oh! I *so* ole!—I do won'er when my time come! Dere Sus, too, *he* good for nuttin' at'all. Once he great walker—great warrior—great hunter—pretty good fellow for redskin; but he quite wore out. Don't see much use why he lib any longer. Injin good for nuttin' when he can't hunt. Sometime he make basket and broom; but dey uses better broom now, and Injin lose *dat* business. What dem calico debbil want here, eh, Miss Patty? Dere redskin, too—two, t'ree, four—all come to see Sus. Won'er nigger don't come to see *me*! Ole black good as ole red-man. Where dem fellow

get all dat calico, and put over deir face? Masser Hodge, what all dat mean?"

"These are anti-renters, Jaaf," my uncle coldly answered. "Men that wish to own your Master Hugh's farms, and relieve him from the trouble of receiving any more rent. They cover their faces, I presume, to conceal their blushes, the modesty of their natures sinking under the sense of their own generosity."

Although it is not very probable that Jaaf understood the whole of this speech, he comprehended a part; for, so thoroughly had his feelings been aroused on this subject, a year or two earlier, when his mind was not quite so much dimmed as at present, that the impression made was indelible. The effect of what my uncle said, nevertheless, was most apparent among the Injins, who barely escaped an outbreak. My uncle has been blamed for imprudence, in having resorted to irony on such an occasion; but, after all, I am far from sure good did not come of it. Of one thing, I am certain; nothing is ever gained by temporizing on the subject of principles; that which is right, had better always be freely said, since it is from the sacrifices that are made of the truth, as concessions to expediency,

that error obtains one-half its power. Policy, or fear, or some other motive kept the rising ire of the Injins under, however, and no interruption occurred, in consequence of this speech.

"What you want here, fellow?" demanded Jaaf, roughly, and speaking as a scold would break out on some intrusive boy. "Home wid ye!—get out! Oh! I *do* grow so ole!—I wish I was as I was when young for your sake, you varmint! What you want wid Masser Hugh's land?— why dat you t'ink to get gentle'em's property, eh? 'Member 'e time when your fadder come creepin' and beggin' to Masser Mordy, to ask just little farm to lib on, and be he tenant, and try to do a little for he family, like; and now come, in calico bundle, to tell my Masser Hugh dat he shan't be masser of he own land. Who *you*, I want to know, to come and talk to gentle'em in dis poor fashion? Go home —get out—off wid you, or you hear what you don't like."

Now, while there was a good deal of "nigger" in this argument, it was quite as good as that which was sometimes advanced in support of the "spirit of the Institutions," more especially that part of the latter which is connected with "aristocracy" and "poodle usages." The negro

had an idea that all his "massers," old and young, were better than the rest of the human race; while the advocates of the modern movement seem to think that every right is concentrated in the lower half of the great "republican family." Every gentleman is no gentleman; and every blackguard, a gentleman, for one postulate of their great social proposition; and, what is more, every man in the least elevated *above* the mass, unless so elevated by the mass, who consequently retain the power to pull him down again, has no rights at all, when put in opposition to the cravings of numbers. So, that after all, the negro was not much more out of the way, in his fashion of viewing things, than the philosophers of industrious honesty! Happily, neither the reasoning of one of these parties, nor that of the other, has much influence on the actual state of things. Facts are facts, and the flounderings of envy and covetousness can no more shut men's eyes to their existence, and prove that black is white, than Jaaf's long-enduring and besetting notion that the Littlepages are the great of the earth, can make us more than what we certainly are. I have recorded the negro's speech, simply to show some, who listen only to the mis-state-

ments and opinions of those who wish to become owners of other men's farms, that there are two sides to the question; and, in the way of argument, I do not see but one is quite as good as the other.

One could hardly refrain from smiling, notwithstanding the seriousness of the circumstances in which we were placed, at the gravity of the Indians during the continuance of this queer episode. Not one of them all rose, turned round, or manifested the least impatience, or even curiosity. The presence of two hundred armed men, bagged in calico, did not induce them to look about them, though their previous experience with this gallant corps may possibly have led them to hold it somewhat cheap.

The time had now come for the Indians to carry out the main design of their visit to Ravensnest, and Prairiefire slowly arose to speak. The reader will understand that Many-tongues translated, sentence by sentence, all that passed, he being expert in the different dialects of the tribes, some of which had carried that of the Onondagoes to the prairies. In this particular, the interpreter was a somewhat remarkable man, not only rendering what was said readily and without hesitation, but ener-

gestically and with considerable power. It may be well to add, however, that in writing out the language I may have used English expressions that are a little more choice, in some instances, than those given by this uneducated person.

"Father," commenced Prairiefire, solemnly, and with a dignity that it is not usual to find connected with modern oratory; the gestures he used being few, but of singular force and significance—"Father—the minds of your children are heavy. They have travelled over a long and thorny path, with moccasins worn out, and feet that were getting sore; but their minds were light. They hoped to look at the face of the Upright Onondago, when they got to the end of the path. They have come to the end of that path, and they see him. He looks as they expected he would look. He is like an oak that lightning may burn, and the snows cover with moss, but which a thousand storms and a hundred winters cannot strip of its leaves. He looks like the oldest oak in the forest. He is very grand. It is pleasant to look on him. When we see him, we see a chief who knew our fathers' fathers, and *their* fathers' fathers. That is a long time ago. He is a tradition, and knows all things. There is

only one thing about him, that ought not to be. He was born a red-man, but has lived so long with the pale-faces, that when he does go away to the Happy Hunting-Grounds, we are afraid the good spirits will mistake him for a pale-face, and point out the wrong path. Should this happen, the red-men would lose the Upright of the Onondagoes, for ever. It should not be. My father does not wish it to be. He will think better. He will come back among his children, and leave his wisdom and advice among the people of his own colour. I ask him to do this.

"It is a long path, now, to the wigwams of red-men. It was not so once, but the path has been stretched. It is a very long path. Our young men travel it often, to visit the graves of their fathers, and they know how long it is. My tongue is not crooked, but it is straight; it will not sing a false song—it tells my father the truth. The path is very long. But the pale-faces are wonderful! What have they not done? What will they not do? They have made canoes and sledges that fly swift as the birds. The deer could not catch them. They have wings of fire, and never weary. They go when men sleep. The path is long, but it is soon travelled with such

wings. My father can make the journey, and not think of weariness. Let him try it. His children will take good care of him. Uncle Sam will give him venison, and he will want nothing. Then, when he starts for the Happy Hunting-Grounds, he will not mistake the path, and will live with red-men for ever."

A long, solemn pause succeeded this speech, which was delivered with great dignity and emphasis. I could see that Susquesus was touched with this request, and at the homage paid his character, by having tribes from the prairies—tribes of which he had never even heard through traditions in his younger days—come so far to do justice to his character; to request him to go and die in their midst. It is true, he must have known that the fragments of the old New York tribes had mostly found their way to those distant regions; nevertheless, it could not but be soothing to learn that even they had succeeded in making so strong an impression in his favour by means of their representations. Most men of his great age would have been insensible to feelings of this sort. Such, in a great degree, was the fact with Jaaf; but such was not the case with the Onondago. As he had said in his former speech

to his visitors, his mind dwelt more on the scenes of his youth, and native emotions came fresher to his spirit, now, than they had done even in middle age. All that remained of his youthful fire seemed to be awakened, and he did not appear that morning, except when compelled to walk and in his outward person, to be a man who had seen much more than his threescore years and ten.

As a matter of course, now that the chiefs from the prairies had so distinctly made known the great object of their visit, and so vividly portrayed their desire to receive back, into the bosom of their communities, one of their colour and race, it remained for the Onondago to let the manner in which he viewed this proposition be known. The profound stillness that reigned around him must have assured the old Indian how anxiously his reply was expected. It extended even to the "disguised and armed," who, by this time, seemed to be as much absorbed in the interest of this curious scene as any of us who occupied the piazza. I do believe that anti-rentism was momentarily forgotten by all parties—tenants, as well as landlords; landlords, as well as tenants. I dare say, Prairiefire had taken his seat three minutes ere Susquesus

arose; during all which time the deep stillness, of which I have spoken, prevailed.

"My children," answered the Onondago, whose voice possessed just enough of the hollow tremulousness of age to render it profoundly impressive, but who spoke so distinctly as to be heard by all present—"My children, we do not know what will happen when we are young—all is young, too, that we see. It is when we grow old, that all grows old with us. Youth is full of hope; but age is full of eyes; it sees things as they are. I have lived in my wigwam alone, since the Great Spirit called out the name of my mother, and she hurried away to the Happy Hunting-Grounds to cook venison for my father, who was called first. My father was a great warrior. You did not know him. He was killed by the Delawares, more than a hundred winters ago.

"I have told you the truth. When my mother went to cook venison for her husband, I was left alone in my wigwam."

Here a long pause succeeded, during which Susquesus appeared to be struggling with his own feelings, though he continued erect, like a tree firmly rooted. As for the chiefs, most of them inclined their bodies forward to listen, so

intense was their interest; here and there one of their number explaining in soft guttural tones, certain passages in the speech to some other Indians, who did not fully comprehend the dialect in which they were uttered. After a time, Susquesus proceeded: "Yes, I lived alone. A young squaw *was* to have entered my wigwam and staid there. She never came. She wished to enter it, but she did not. Another warrior had her promise, and it was right that she should keep her word. Her mind was heavy at first, but she lived to feel that it is good to be just. No squaw has ever lived in any wigwam of mine. I did not think ever to be a father: but see how different it has turned out! I am now the father of all red-men! Every Indian warrior is my son. *You* are my children; I will own you when we meet on the pleasant paths beyond the hunts you make to-day. You will call me father, and I will call you sons.

"That will be enough. You ask me to go on the long path with you, and leave my bones on the prairies. I have heard of those hunting-grounds. Our ancient traditions told us of them. 'Towards the rising sun,' they said, 'is a great salt lake, and towards the setting sun, great lakes of sweet water. Across the

great salt lake is a distant country, filled with pale-faces, who live in large villages, and in the midst of cleared fields. Towards the setting sun were large cleared fields, too, but no pale-faces, and few villages. Some of our wise men thought these fields were the fields of red-men following the pale-faces round after the sun; some thought they were fields in which the pale-faces were following them. I think this was the truth. The red-man cannot hide himself in any corner, where the pale-face will not find him. The Great Spirit will have it so. It is his will; the red-man must submit.

"My sons, the journey you ask me to make is too long for old age. I have lived with the pale-faces, until one-half of my heart is white; though the other half is red. One-half is filled with the traditions of my fathers, the other half is filled with the wisdom of the stranger. I cannot cut my heart in two pieces. It must all go with you, or all stay here. The body must stay with the heart, and both must remain where they have now dwelt so long. I thank you, my children, but what you wish can never come to pass.

"You see a very old man, but you see a very unsettled mind. There are red traditions and

pale-face traditions. Both speak of the Great Spirit, but only one speak of his Son. A soft voice has been whispering in my ear, lately, much of the Son of God. Do they speak to you in that way on the prairies? I know not what to think.—I wish to think what is right; but it is not easy to understand."

Here Susquesus paused; then he took his seat, with the air of one who was at a loss how to explain his own feelings. Prairiefire waited a respectful time for him to continue his address, but perceiving that he rose not, he stood up, himself, to request a further explanation.

"My father has spoken wisdom," he said, "and his children have listened. They have not heard enough; they wish to hear more. If my father is tired of standing, he can sit; his children do not ask him to stand. They ask to know where that soft voice came from, and what it said?"

Susquesus did not rise, now, but he prepared for a reply. Mr. Warren was standing quite near him, and Mary was leaning on his arm. He signed for the father to advance a step or two, in complying with which, the parent brought forth the unconscious child also.

"See, my children," resumed Susquesus.

"This is a great medicine of the pale-faces. He talks always of the Great Spirit, and of his goodness to men. It is his business to talk of the Happy Hunting-Ground, and of good and bad pale-faces. I cannot tell you whether he does any good or not. Many such talk of these things constantly among the whites, but I can see little change, and I have lived among them, now, more than eighty winters and summers — yes, near ninety. The land is changed so much, that I hardly know it; but the people do not alter. See, there; here are men—pale-faces in calico bags. Why do they run about, and dishonour the red-man by calling themselves Injins? I will tell you."

There was now a decided movement among the "virtuous and industrious," though a strong desire to hear the old man out prevented any violent interruption at that time. I question if ever men listened more intently, than we all lent our faculties now, to ascertain what the Upright of the Onondagoes thought of anti-rentism. I received the opinions he expressed with the greater alacrity, because I knew he was a living witness of most of what he related, and because I was clearly of opinion that he knew quite as much of the subject as many

who rose in the legislative halls to discuss the subject.

"These men are not warriors," continued Susquesus. "They hide their faces and they carry rifles, but they frighten none but the squaws and papooses. When they take a scalp, it is because they are a hundred, and their enemies one. They are not braves. Why do they come at all? What do they want? They want the land of this young chief. My children, all the land, far and near, was ours. The pale-faces came with their papers, and made laws, and said, 'It is well! We want this land. There is plenty farther west for you red-men. Go there, and hunt, and fish, and plant your corn, and leave us this land.' Our red brethren did as they were asked to do. The pale-faces had it as they wished. They made laws, and sold the land, as the red-men sell the skins of beavers. When the money was paid, each pale-face got a deed, and thought he owned all that he had paid for. But the wicked spirit that drove out the red-man is now about to drive off the pale-face chiefs. It is the same devil, and it is no other. He wanted land then, and he wants land now. There is one difference, and it is this. When the pale-face drove off the

red-man there was no treaty between them. They had not smoked together, and given wampum, and signed a paper. If they had, it was to agree that the red-man should go away, and the pale-face stay. When the pale-face drives off the pale-face, there is a treaty; they have smoked together, and given wampum, and signed a paper. This is the difference. Indian will keep his word with Indian! pale-face will not keep his word with pale-face."

Susquesus stopped speaking, and the eye of every chief was immediately, and for the first time that morning, turned on the "disguised and armed"—the "virtuous and hard working." A slight movement occurred in the band, but no outbreak took place; and in the midst of the sensation that existed, Eaglesflight slowly arose. The nature, dignity and ease of his manner more than compensated for his personal appearance, and he now seemed to us all one of those by no means unusual instances of the power of the mind to overshadow, and even to obliterate, the imperfections of the body. Before the effect of what Susquesus had just said was lost, this eloquent and much-practised orator began his address. His utterance was highly impressive, being so deliberate, with pauses so well

adjusted, as to permit Manytongues to give full effect to each syllable he translated.

"My brethren," said Eaglesflight, addressing the Injins and the other auditors, rather than any one else, "you have heard the words of age. They are the words of wisdom. They are the words of truth. The Upright of the Onondagoes cannot lie. He never could. The Great Spirit made him a just Indian; and, as the Great Spirit makes an Indian, so he is. My brethren, I will tell you his story; it will be good for *you* to hear it. We have heard your story; first from the interpreter, now from Susquesus. It is a bad story. We were made sorrowful when we heard it. What is right should be done; what is wrong, should not be done. There are bad red-men, and good red-men: there are bad pale-faces and good pale-faces. The good red-men and good pale-faces do what is right; the bad, what is wrong. It is the same with both. The Great Spirit of the Indian and the Great Spirit of the white man are alike; so are the wicked spirits. There is no difference in this.

"My brethren, a red-man knows in his heart when he does what is right, and when he does what is wrong. He does not want to be told.

He tells himself. His face is red, and he cannot change colour. The paint is too thick. When he tells himself how much wrong he has done, he goes into the bushes, and is sorry. When he comes out he is a better man.

"My brethren, it is different with a pale-face. He is white, and uses no stones for paint. When he tells himself that he has done wrong, his face can paint itself. Everybody can see that he is ashamed. He does not go into the bushes; it would do no good. He paints himself so quickly that there is no time. He hides his face in a calico bag. This is not good, but it is better than to be pointed at with the finger.

"My brethren, the Upright of the Onondagoes has never run into the bushes because he was ashamed. There has been no need of it. He has not told himself he was wicked. He has not put his face in a calico bag; he cannot paint himself like a pale-face.

"My brethren, listen; I will tell you a story. A long time ago everything was different here. The clearings were small, and the woods large. Then the red-men were many, and the pale-faces few. Now it is different. You know how it is to-day.

"My brethren, I am talking of what was a hundred winters since. We were not born then. Susquesus was then young, and strong, and active. He could run with the deer, and battle with the bear. He was a chief, because his fathers were chiefs before him. The Onondagoes knew him and loved him. Not a war-path was opened, that he was not the first to go on it. No other warrior could count so many scalps. No young chief had so many listeners at the council-fire. The Onondagoes were proud that they had so great a chief, and one so young. They thought he would live a long time, and they should see him, and be proud of him for fifty winters more.

"My brethren, Susquesus has lived twice fifty winters longer; but he has not lived them with his own people. No; he has been a stranger among the Onondagoes all that time. The warriors he knew are dead. The wigwams that he went into, have fallen to the earth with time; the graves have crumbled, and the sons' sons of his companions walk heavily with old age. Susquesus is there; you see him; he sees you. He can walk; he speaks; he sees: he is a living tradition! Why is this so?—The Great Spirit has not called him away. He is a

just Indian, and it is good that he be kept here, that all red-men may know how much he is loved. So long as he stays, no red-man need want a calico bag.

"My brethren, the younger days of Susquesus, the Trackless, were happy. When he had seen twenty winters, he was talked of in all the neighbouring tribes. The scalp notches were a great many. When he had seen thirty winters, no chief of the Onandagoes had more honour or more power. He was first among the Onondagoes. There was but one fault in him. He did not take a squaw into his wigwam. Death comes when he is not looked for; so does marriage. At length my father became like other men, and wished for a squaw. It happened in this way.

"My brethren, red-men have laws, as well as the pale-faces. If there is a difference, it is in keeping those laws. A law of the red-men gives every warrior his prisoners. If he bring off a warrior, he is his; if a squaw, she is his. This is right. He can take the scalp of the warrior; he can take the squaw into his wigwam, if it be empty. A warrior, named Waterfowl, brought in a captive girl of the Delawares. She was called Ouithwith, and was handsomer than the humming-bird. The Waterfowl had

his ears open, and heard how beautiful she was. He watched long to take her, and he did take her. She was his, and he thought to take her into his wigwam when it was empty. Three moons passed, before that could be. In the meantime, Susquesus saw Ouithwith, and Ouithwith saw Susquesus. Their eyes were never off each other. He was the noblest moose of the woods, in her eyes; she was the spotted-fawn, in his. He wished to ask her to his wigwam; she wished to go.

"My brethren, Susquesus was a great chief; the Waterfowl was only a warrior. One had power and authority; the other had neither. But there is authority among red-men beyond that of the chief. It is the red-man's law. Ouithwith belonged to the Waterfowl, and she did not belong to Susquesus. A great council was held, and men differed. Some said that so useful a chief, so renowned a warrior as Susquesus, ought to be the husband of Ouithwith; some said her husband ought to be the Waterfowl, for he had brought her out from among the Delawares. A great difficulty arose on this question, and the whole Six Nations took part in it. Many warriors were for the law, but most were for Susquesus. They loved him, and

thought he would make the best husband for the Delaware girl. For six moons the quarrel thickened, and a dark cloud gathered over the path that led among the tribes. Warriors who had taken scalps in company, looked at each other as the panther looks at the deer. Some were ready to dig up the hatchet for the law; some for the pride of the Onondagoes, and the humming-bird of the Delawares. The squaws took sides with Susquesus. Far and near, they met to talk together, and they even threatened to light a council-fire, and smoke around it, like warriors and chiefs.

"Brethren, things could not stand so another moon. Ouithwith must go into the wigwam of the Waterfowl, or into the wigwam of Susquesus. The squaws said she should go into the wigwam of Susquesus; and they met together, and led her to his door. As she went along that path, Ouithwith looked at her feet with her eyes, but her heart leaped like the bounding fawn, when playing in the sun. She did not go in at the door. The Waterfowl was there, and forbade it. He had come alone; his friends were but few, while the heads and arms of the friends of Susquesus were as plenty as the berries on the bush.

"My brethren, that command of the Waterfowl's was like a wall of rock before the door of the Trackless's wigwam. Ouithwith could not go in. The eyes of Susquesus said 'no,' while his heart said 'yes.' He offered the Waterfowl his rifle, his powder, all his skins, his wigwam; but Waterfowl would rather have his prisoner, and answered, 'no.' 'Take my scalp,' he said; 'you are strong and can do it; but do not take my prisoner.'

"My brethren, Susquesus then stood up, in the midst of the tribe, and opened his mind. 'The Waterfowl is right,' he said. 'She is his, by our laws; and what the laws of the red-man say, the red-man must do. When the warrior is about to be tormented, and he asks for time to go home and see his friends, does he not come back at the day and hour agreed on? Shall I, Susquesus, the first chief of the Onondagoes, be stronger than the law? No—my face would be for ever hid in the bushes, did that come to pass. It should not be—it *shall* not be. Take her, Waterfowl; she is yours. Deal kindly by her, for she is as tender as the wren when it first quits the nest. I must go into the woods for a while. When my mind is at peace, Susquesus will return.

"Brethren, the stillness in that tribe, while

Susquesus was getting his rifle, and his horn, and his best moccasins, and his tomahawk, was like that which comes in the darkness. Men saw him go, but none dare follow. He left no trail, and he was called the Trackless. His mind was never at peace, for he never came back. Summer and winter came and went often before the Onondagoes heard of him among the pale-faces. All that time the Waterfowl lived with Ouithwith in his wigwam, and she bore him children. The chief was gone, but the law remained. Go you, men of the pale-faces, who hide your shame in calico bags, and do the same. Follow the example of an Indian—be honest, like the Upright of the Onondagoes!"

While this simple narrative was drawing to a close, I could detect the signs of great uneasiness among the leaders of the "calico bags." The biting comparison between themselves and their own course, and an Indian and his justice, was intolerable to them, for nothing has more conduced to the abuses connected with anti-rentism than the wide-spread delusion that prevails in the land concerning the omnipotency of the masses. The error is deeply rooted which persuades men that fallible parts can make an infallible whole. It was offensive to

their self-conceit, and menacing to their success. A murmur ran through the assembly, and a shout followed. The Injins rattled their rifles, most relying on intimidation to effect their purpose; but a few seemed influenced by a worse intention, and I have never doubted that blood would have been shed in the next minute, the Indians now standing to their arms, had not the sheriff of the county suddenly appeared on the piazza, with Jack Dunning at his elbow. This unexpected apparition produced a pause, during which the "disguised and armed" fell back some twenty yards, and the ladies rushed into the house. As for my uncle and myself, we were as much astonished as any there at this interruption.

CHAPTER X.

"Strong sense, deep feeling, passions strong,
A hate of tyrant and of knave,
A love of right, a scorn of wrong,
Of coward and of slave."

HALLECK'S WILD ROSE OF ALLOWAY.

ALTHOUGH experience has shown that the appearance of a sheriff is by no means a pledge of the appearance of a friend of the law in this anti-rent movement, in our instance the fact happened to be so. It was known to the "disguised and armed" that this functionary was disposed to do his duty.* One of the rank

* The editor may as well say here, that, for obvious reasons, the *names*, counties, &c. used in these manuscripts are feigned, the real localities being close enough to those mentioned for the double purposes of truth and fiction. As one of the "honourable gentlemen" of the Legislature has quoted our references to "*provincial*" feelings and notions, with a magnificence that proves how thoroughly he is a man of the world himself, we will tell all the rest of the human race, who may

absurdities into which democracy has fallen, and democracy is no more infallible than individual democrats, has been to make the officers of the militia, and the sheriffs of counties, elective. The consequences are, that the militia is converted into a farce, and the execution of the laws in a particular county is very much dependent on the pleasure of that county to have them executed or not. The last is a capital arrangement for the resident debtor, for instance, though absent creditors are somewhat disposed to find fault. But all this is of no great moment, since the theories for laws and governments in vogue just now are of such a character as would render laws and governments quite unnecessary, at all, were they founded in truth. Restraints of all kinds can only be injurious when they are imposed on perfection!

The instant the commotion commenced, and the ladies fled, I took Seneca and his fellow-prisoner by the arm, and led them into the

happen to read this book, that we have made this explanation lest that comprehensive view of things, which has hitherto been so eager, because a street and a house are named in the pages of a fiction, to suppose that everybody is to believe they know the very individual who dwelt in it, should fancy that our allusions are to this or that particular functionary.—EDITOR.

library. This I did, conceiving it to be unfair to keep prisoners in a situation of danger. This I did, too, without reflecting in the least on anything but the character of the act. Returning to the piazza immediately, I was not missed, and was a witness of all that passed.

As has been intimated, this particular sheriff was known to be unfavourable to the anti-rent movement, and, no one supposing he would appear in their midst unsupported, in such a scene, the Injins fell back, thus arresting the danger of an immediate collision. It has since been privately intimated to me, that some among them, after hearing the narrative of Eagles-flight, really felt ashamed that a redskin should have a more lively sense of justice than a white man. Whatever may be said of the hardships of the tenants, and of "poodle usages," and of "aristocracy," and "fat hens," by the leaders in this matter, it by no means follows that those leaders believe in their own theories and arguments. On the contrary, it is generally the case with such men, that they keep themselves quite free from the excitement that it is their business to awaken in others, resembling the celebrated John Wilkes, who gravely said to George III., in describing the character of a

former co-operator in agitation, "*He* was a Wilksite, sir; *I* never was."

The unexpected appearance of Dunning, the offending agent, too, was not without its effect, —for they who were behind the curtains found it difficult to believe that he would dare to show himself at Ravensnest without a sufficient support. Those who thought thus, however, did not know Jack Dunning. He had a natural and judicious aversion to being tarred and feathered, it is true; but, when it was necessary to expose himself, no man did it more freely. The explanation of his unlooked-for arrival is simply this.

Uneasy at our manner of visiting Ravensnest, this trustworthy friend, after the delay of a day or two, determined to follow us. On reaching the county he heard of the firing of the barn, and of the attempt on the house, and went in quest of the sheriff without a moment's delay. As the object of Dunning was to get the ladies out of the lion's den, he did not wait for the summoning of the *posse comitatus;* but, hiring a dozen resolute fellows, they were armed, and all set out in a body for the Nest. When within a mile or two of the house, the rumour reached the party that we were besieged; and

it became expedient to have recourse to some manœuvring, in order to throw succour into the garrison. Dunning was familiar with all the windings and turnings of the place, having passed many a month at the Nest with my uncle and father, both as man and boy; and he knew the exact situation of the cliff, court, and of the various peculiar features of the place. Among other arrangements that had been made of late years, a door had been opened at the end of the long gallery which led through one of the wings, and a flight of steps been built against the rocks, by means of which certain paths and walks that meandered through the meadows and followed the windings of the stream might be reached. Dunning determined to attempt an ascent from this quarter, trusting to make himself heard by some one within, should he find the door fastened. Everything succeeded to his wishes,—the cook, alone, of all the household, being at her post in the other wing, and seeing him the instant he presented himself on the upper part of the steps. Jack Dunning's face was so well known at the Nest, that the good woman did not hesitate a moment about admitting him, and he thus penetrated into the buildings, followed by all his party. The last

he kept concealed by sending them into the chambers, while he and the sheriff drew near the door, and heard most of the speech of Eagles-flight, the attention of everybody being given to the narrative. The reader knows the rest.

I might as well say at once, however, that Opportunity, who, by her position, had seen the entrance of Dunning and his party, no sooner found herself alone with the prisoners, than she unbound them, and showed them the means of flight, by the same passage, door, and steps. At least, such has been my supposition, for the sister has never been questioned on the subject. Seneca and his co-rascal vanished, and have not since been seen in our part of the country. In consequence of the flight, no one has ever complained of either for arson. The murder of Steele, the deputy-sheriff of Delaware, has given a check to the "Injin" system, and awakened a feeling in the country that was not to be resisted, in that form at least, by men engaged in a scheme so utterly opposed to the first principles of honesty as anti-rentism.

When I regained the piazza, after thrusting Seneca into the library, the Injins had fallen back to the distance of twenty or thirty yards

from the piazza, in evident confusion; while the Indians, cool and collected, stood to their arms watchful as crouching panthers, but held in hand by the calmness with which their leaders watched the progress of events. The sheriff now required the first to disperse, as violaters of the law; with the penalties of which he menanced them, in a voice sufficiently clear and distinct to make itself audible. There was a moment during which the Injins seemed undecided. They had come with the full intent to inflict on my uncle and myself the punishment of the tar-bucket, with the hope of frightening us into some sort of a compromise; the cowardly expedient of a hundred men's attacking and annoying one being particularly in favour with a certain class of those ultra-friends of liberty, who fancy that they alone possess all the public virtue of the nation, which public virtue justifies any of their acts. All of a sudden, the entire body of these virtuous citizens, who found it necessary to hide their blushes beneath calico, fell rapidly back; observing a little order at first, which soon degenerated, however, into confusion, and shortly after into a downright, scampering flight. The fact was, that Dunning's men

began to show themselves at the windows of the chambers, thrusting muskets and rifles out before them, and the "disguised and armed," as has invariably been the case in the anti-rent disturbances, exhibited a surprising facility at the retreat. If he is "thrice-armed who hath his quarrel just," ten times is he a coward who hath his quarrel unjust. This is the simple solution of the cowardice that has been so generally shown by those who have been engaged in this "Injin" warfare; causing twenty to chase one, secret attempts on the lives of sentinels, and all the other violations of manly feeling that have disgraced the proceedings of the heroes.

As soon as released from all immediate apprehension on the score of the Injins, we had time to attend to the Indians. These warriors gazed after those who were caricaturing their habits, and most of all their spirit, with silent contempt; and Prairiefire, who spoke a little English, said to me with emphasis, "Poor Injin —poor tribe—run away from own whoop!" This was positively every syllable the men of the prairies deigned to bestow on these disturbers of the public peace, the agents of covetousness, who prowl about at night, like

wolves, ready to seize the stray lamb, but are quick to sneak off at the growl of the mastiff. One cannot express himself in terms too harsh of such wretches, who in no instance have manifested a solitary spark of the true spirit of freedom; having invariably quailed before authority when that authority has assumed in the least the aspect of its power, and as invariably trampled it under foot, whenever numbers put danger out of the question.

Old Susquesus had been a quiet observer of all that passed. He knew the nature of the disturbance, and understood everything material that was connected with the outbreaks. As soon as order was restored on the piazza, he rose once more to address his guests.

"My children," he said, solemnly, "you hear my voice for the last time. Even the wren cannot sing for ever. The very eagle's wing gets tired in time. I shall soon cease to speak. When I reach the happy hunting-grounds of the Onondagoes, I will tell the warriors I meet there of your visit. Your fathers shall know that their sons still love justice. Let the pale-faces sign papers, and laugh at them afterwards. The promise of a red-man is his law. If he is made a prisoner, and his conquerors wish to

torment him, they are too generous to do so without letting him go to his tribe to take leave of his friends. When the time is reached, he comes back. If he promises skins, he brings them, though no law can follow into the woods to force him to do so. His promise goes with him; his promise is stronger than chains—it brings him back.

"My children, never forget this. You are not pale-faces, to say one thing and do another. What you say, you do. When you make a law, you keep it. This is right. No red-man wants another's wigwam. If he wants a wigwam, he builds one himself. It is not so with the pale-faces. The man who has no wigwam tries to get away his neighbour's. While he does this, he reads in his Bible and goes to his church. I have sometimes thought, the more he reads and prays, the more he tries to get into his neighbour's wigwam. So it seems to an Indian, but it may not be so.

"My children, the red-man is his own master. He goes and comes as he pleases. If the young men strike the war-path, he can strike it, too. He can go on the war-path, or the hunt, or he can stay in his wigwam. All he has to do, is to keep his promise, not steal, and not to go

into another red-man's wigwam unasked. He is his own master. He does not *say* so; he *is* so. How is it with the pale-faces? They say they are free when the sun rises; they say they are free when the sun is over their heads; they say they are free when the sun goes down behind the hills. They never stop talking of their being their own masters. They talk of *that* more than they read their Bibles. I have lived near a hundred winters among them, and know what they are. They do that; then they take away another's wigwam. They talk of liberty; then they say you shall have this farm, you shan't have that. They talk of liberty, and call to one another to put on calico bags, that fifty men may tar and feather one. They talk of liberty, and want everything their own way.

"My children, these pale-faces might go back with you to the prairies, and learn to do what is right. I do not wonder they hide their faces in bags. They feel ashamed; they ought to feel ashamed.

"My children, this is the last time you will hear my voice. The tongue of an old man cannot move for ever. This is my counsel: do what is right. The Great Spirit will tell you

what that is. Let it be done. What my son said of me is true. It was hard to do; the feelings yearned to do otherwise, but it was not done. In a little time peace came on my spirit, and I was glad. I could not go back to live among my people, for I was afraid of doing what was wrong. I staid among the pale-faces, and made friends here. My children, farewell; do what is right, and you will be happier than the richest pale-face who does what is wrong."

Susquesus took his seat, and at the same time each of the redskins advanced and shook his hand. The Indians make few professions, but let their acts speak for them. Not a syllable was uttered by one of those rude warriors as he took his leave of Susquesus. Each man had willingly paid this tribute to one whose justice and self-denial were celebrated in their traditions, and having paid it, he went his way satisfied, if not altogether happy. Each man shook hands, too, with all on the piazza, and to us they expressed their thanks for their kind treatment. My uncle Ro had distributed the remains of his trinkets among them, and they left us with the most amicable feelings. Still there was nothing dramatic in their departure.

It was simple as their arrival. They had come to see the Upright of the Onondagoes, had fulfilled their mission, and were ready to depart. Depart they did, and as I saw their line winding along the highway, the episode of such a visit appeared to us all more like a dream than reality. No interruption occurred to the return of these men, and half an hour after they had left the piazza we saw them winding their way up the hill, descending which we had first seen them.

"Well, Hodge," said Jack Dunning, two or three hours later, "what is your decision; will you remain here, or will you go to your own place in Westchester?"

"I will remain here until it is our pleasure to depart; then we will endeavour to be as free as Indians, and go where we please, provided always we do not go into our neighbour's wigwam against his will."

Jack Dunning smiled, and he paced the library once or twice before he resumed.

"They told me, as soon as I got into the county, that you, and all belonging to you, were preparing to retreat the morning after the attempt to fire your house."

"One of those amiable perversions of the

truth that so much embellish the morality of the whole affair. What men wish, they fancy, and what they fancy, they say. The girls, even, protest they would not quit the house while it has a roof to cover their heads. But, Jack, whence comes this spirit?"

"I should think that was the last question a reasonably informed man need ask," answered Dunning, laughing. "It is very plain where it comes from.—It comes from the devil, and has every one of the characteristics of his handy-work. In the first place, love of money, or covetousness, is at its root. Then lies are its agents. Its first and most pretending lie is that of liberty, every principle of which it tramples under foot. Then come in the fifty auxiliaries in the way of smaller inventions, denying the facts of the original settlement of the country, fabricating statements concerning its progress, and asserting directly in the teeth of truth, such statements as it is supposed will serve a turn.* There can be no mistaking

* The frightful propensity to effect its purposes by lying, has come to such a head in the country, as seriously to threaten the subversion of all justice. Without adverting to general facts, two circumstances directly connected with this anti-rent question, force themselves on my attention. They refer to large estates that were inherited by an Englishman, who

the origin of such contrivances, or all that has been taught us of good and evil is a fiction. Really, Hodge, I am astonished that so sensible a man should have asked the question."

"Perhaps you are right, Jack; but to what will it lead?"

"Ay, that is not so easily answered. The recent events in Delaware have aroused the better feelings of the country, and there is no telling what it may do. One thing, however, I hold to be certain; the spirit connected with this affair must be put down, thoroughly, effectually, completely, or we are lost. Let it once be understood in the country that men can

passed half of a long life in the country. In public legislative documents it has been pretended that the question of his title to his estates is still open, when the published reports of the highest court of the country show that a decision was made in his favour thirty years since; and, in reference to his heir, it has been officially stated that he has invariably refused to give any leases but such as run on lives. Now, it is of little moment whether this be true or not, since the law allows every man to do as he may please in this respect. But the fact, as I understand from the agent who draws the leases, is precisely the reverse of that which has been openly stated in this legislative document; THE PRESENT POSSESSOR OF THE ESTATE IN QUESTION, HAVING BEEN EARNESTLY SOLICITED BY THE TENANTS TO GRANT NEW LEASES ON LIVES, AND ABSOLUTELY REFUSED TO COMPLY! In this instance, the Legislature, doubtless, have been deceived by the interested representations of anti-renters.—EDITOR.

control their own indebtedness, and fashion contracts to suit their own purposes by combinations and numbers, and pandemonium would soon be a paradise compared to New York. There is not a single just ground of complaint in the nature of any of these leases, whatever hardships may exist in particular cases; but, admitting that there were false principles of social life, embodied in the relation of landlord and tenant, as it exists among us, *it would be a far greater evil to attempt a reform under such a combination, than to endure the original wrong.*"

"I suppose these gentry fancy themselves strong enough to thrust their interests into politics, and hope to succeed by that process. But anti-masonry, and various other schemes of that sort have failed hitherto, and this may fail along with it. That is a redeeming feature of the institutions, Jack; you may humbug for a time, but the humbuggery is not apt to last for ever. It is only to be regretted that the really upright portion of the community are so long in making themselves felt; would they only be one-half as active as the miscreants, we should get along well enough."

"The result is unknown. The thing *may* be put down, totally, effectually, and in a way

to kill the snake, not scotch it; or it may be met with only half-way measures; in which case it will remain like a disease in the human system, always existing, always menacing relapses, quite possibly to be the agent of the final destruction of the body."

My uncle, nevertheless, was as good as his word, and did remain in the county, where he is yet. Our establishment has received another reinforcement, however, and a change occurred, shortly after our visit from the Injins, in the policy of the anti-renters, the two giving us a feeling of security that might otherwise have been wanting. The reinforcement came from certain young men, who have found their way across from the springs, and become guests at the Nest. They are all old acquaintances of mine, most of them school-fellows, and also admirers of the young ladies. Each of my uncle's wards, the Coldbrooke and the Marston, has an accepted lover, as we now discovered, circumstances that have left me unobstructed in pursuing my suit with Mary Warren. I have found Patt a capital ally, for she loves the dear girl almost as much as I do myself, and has been of great service in the affair. I am conditionally accepted, though Mr. Warren's con-

sent has not been asked. Indeed, I much question if the good rector has the least suspicion of what is in the wind. As for my uncle Ro, he knew all about it, though I have never breathed a syllable to him on the subject. Fortunately, he is well satisfied with the choice made by his two wards, and this has somewhat mitigated the disappointment.

My uncle Ro is not in the least mercenary; and the circumstance that Mary Warren has not a cent, gives him no concern. He is, indeed, so rich himself that he knows it is in his power to make any reasonable addition to my means, and, if necessary, to place me above the dangers of anti-rentism. The following is a specimen of his humour, and of his manner of doing things when the humour takes him. We were in the library one morning, about a week after the Injins were shamed out of the field by the Indians, for that was the secret of their final disappearance from our part of the country; but, one morning, about a week after their last visit, my grandmother, my uncle, Patt and I were seated in the library, chatting over matters and things, when my uncle suddenly exclaimed—

"By the way, Hugh, I have a piece of im-

portant news to communicate to you; news affecting your interests to the tune of fifty thousand dollars."

"No more anti-rent dangers, I hope, Roger?" said my grandmother, anxiously.

"Hugh has little to apprehend from that source, just now. The Supreme Court of the United States is his buckler, and it is broad enough to cover his whole body. As for his future leases, if he will take my advice, he will not grant one for a term longer than five years, and then his tenants will become clamorous petitioners to the legislature to allow them to make their own bargains. Shame will probably bring your free-trade-men round, and the time will come when your double-distilled friends of liberty will begin to see it is a very indifferent sort of freedom which will not permit a wealthy landlord to part with his farms for a long period, or a poor husbandman to make the best bargain in his power. No, no; Hugh has nothing serious to apprehend, just now at least, from that source, whatever may come of it hereafter. The loss to which I allude is much more certain, and to the tune of fifty thousand dollars, I repeat."

"That is a good deal of money for me to

lose, sir," I answered, but little disturbed by the intelligence; "and it might embarrass me to raise so large a sum in a hurry. Nevertheless, I confess to no very great concern on the subject, notwithstanding your announcement. I have no debts, and the title to all I possess is indisputable, unless it shall be decided that a *royal* grant is not to be tolerated by republicans."

"All very fine, Master Hugh, but you forget that you are the natural heir of my estate. Patt knows that she is to have a slice of it when she marries; and I am now about to make a settlement of just as much more on another young lady, by way of marriage portion."

"Roger!" exclaimed my grandmother, "you surely do not mean what you say! Of as much more!"

"Of precisely that money, my dear mother. I have taken a fancy to a young lady, and as I cannot marry her myself, I am determined to make her a good match, so far as money is concerned, for some one else."

"But why not marry her yourself?" I asked: "older men than yourself marry every day."

"Ay, widowers, I grant you; *they* will marry until they are a thousand: but it is not so with us bachelors. Let a man once get fairly

past forty, and it is no easy matter to bring him to the sacrifice. No, Jack Dunning's being here is the most fortunate thing in the world; and so I have set him at work to draw up a settlement on the young lady to whom I refer, without any rights to her future husband, let him turn out to be whom he may."

"It is Mary Warren!" exclaimed my sister, in a tone of delight.

My uncle smiled, and he tried to look demure; but I cannot say that he succeeded particularly well.

"It is—it is—it is Mary Warren, and uncle Ro means to give her a fortune!" added Patt, bounding across the floor like a young deer, throwing herself into her guardian's lap, hugging and kissing him, as if she were nothing but a child, though a fine young woman of nineteen. "Yes, it is Mary Warren, and uncle Hodge is a delightful old gentleman,—no, a delightful young gentleman; and were he only thirty years younger, he should have his own heiress for a wife himself. Good, dear, generous, sensible uncle Ro. This is so like him, after all his disappointment; for I know, Hugh, his heart was set on your marrying Henrietta.

"And what has my marrying, or not marry-

ing Henrietta, to do with this settlement of fifty thousand dollars on Miss Warren? The young ladies are not even connected, I believe."

"Oh! you know how all such things are managed," said Patt, blushing and laughing at the passing allusion to matrimony, even in another; "Mary Warren will not be Mary Warren always."

"Who will she be, then?" demanded uncle Ro, quickly.

But Patt was too true to the rights and privileges of her sex to say anything directly that might seem to commit her friend. She patted her uncle's cheek, therefore, like a saucy minx as she was, coloured still higher, looked archly at me, then averted her eyes consciously, as if betraying a secret, and returned to her seat as demurely as if the subject had been one of the gravest character.

"But are you serious in what you have told us, Roger?" asked my grandmother, with more interest than I supposed the dear old lady would be apt to feel on such a subject. "Is not this settlement a matter of fancy?"

"True as the gospel, my dear mother."

"And is Martha right? Is Mary Warren really the favoured young lady?"

"For a novelty, Patt is right."

"Does Mary Warren know of your intention, or has her father been consulted in the matter?"

"Both know of it; we had it all over together, last evening, and Mr. Warren *consents*."

"To what?" I cried, springing to my feet, the emphasis on the last word being too significant to be overlooked.

"To receive Hugh Roger Littlepage, which is my own name, recollect, for a son-in-law; and what is more, the young lady is 'agreeable.'"

"We all know that she is more than agreeable," put in Patt; "she is delightful, excellent; agreeable is no word to apply to Mary Warren."

"Pshaw, girl! If you had travelled, now, you would know that this expression is cockney English for agreeing to a thing. Mary Warren agrees to become the wife of Hugh Roger Littlepage, and I settle fifty thousand dollars on her, in consideration of matrimony."

"This Hugh Roger Littlepage," cried Patt, throwing an arm around my neck; "not that Hugh Roger Littlepage. Do but add that, dearest, dearest uncle, and I will kiss you for an hour."

"Excuse me, my child; a fourth of that

time would be as much as I could reasonably expect. I believe you are right, however, as I do not remember that *this* Hugh Roger had any connexion with the affair, unless it were to give his money. I shall deny none of your imputations."

Just as this was said, the door of the library was slowly opened, and Mary Warren appeared. The moment she saw who composed our party, she would have drawn back, but my grandmother kindly bade her "come in."

"I was afraid of disturbing a family party, ma'am," Mary timidly answered.

Patt darted forward, threw her arm around Mary's waist, and drew her into the room, closing and locking the door. All this was done in a way to attract attention, and as if the young lady wished to attract attention. We all smiled but Mary, who seemed half pleased, half frightened.

"It *is* a family party," cried Patt, kissing her affianced sister, "and no one else shall be admitted to it, unless good Mr. Warren come to claim his place. Uncle Ro has told us all about it, and we know all."

Mary hid her face in Patt's bosom, but it was soon drawn out by my dear grandmother,

to kiss it; then my uncle had his turn, and Patt hers. After this, the whole party, except Mary and I, slid out of the room, and—yes, and then it was *my* turn.

We are not yet married, but the day is named. The same is true with respect to the two wards, and even Patt blushes, and my grandmother smiles, occasionally, when gentlemen, who are travelling in Egypt just now, are named. The last letters from young Beekman, they tell me, say that he was then there. The three marriages are to take place in St. Andrew's church, Mr. Warren being engaged to officiate.

The reader will be surprised to hear two things. My engagement with the daughter of a poor clergyman has produced great scandal among the anti-renters, they who so loudly decry aristocracy! The objection is that the match is not equal! That equality which is the consequence of social position, connexions, education and similarity of habits, thoughts and, if you will, prejudices, is all thrown away on these persons. They have no notion of its existence; but they can very well understand that the owner of an unencumbered and handsome estate is richer than the heiress of a poor

divine, who can just make the year meet on five hundred dollars per annum. I let them grumble, as I know they must and will find fault with something connected with myself, until they have got away my land, or are satisfied it is not to be had. As for Opportunity, I have been assured that she threatens to sue me for a "breach of promise;" nor should I be at all surprised were she actually to make the attempt. It is by no means unusual, when a person sets his or her whole soul on a particular object, to imagine circumstances favourable to his or her views, which never had an existence; and Opportunity may fancy that what I have heard has been "the buzzing in her own ear." Then the quackery of legislatures has set the ladies at work in earnest, and he will soon be a fortunate youth who can pass through his days of celibacy without some desperate assault, legal or moral, from the other sex. Besides, nothing can be out of the way, when it is found that the more popular and most numerous branch of the Legislature of New York really believes it can evade that solemn provision of the Constitution of the United States, which says "no State shall pass any law impairing the

obligations of contracts," by enacting, as they can regulate the statute of descent, that whenever a landlord dies, the tenant, by applying to the chancellor, can have his leasehold tenure converted into a mortgage, on discharging which the land will be his unencumbered! We have heard of a "thimble-rig administration" in England, and really that industrious nation seems to have exported the breed to this country. How many of those who voted for such a law will like to see the ays and noes on the journals of the assembly ten years hence? If there should be one such man left in the state, he will be an object of humane commiseration. We have had many efforts at legislative chicanery, and some that have been tolerably clever; but this is a palpable experiment in the same way, made for a reason that everybody understands, that has not even the negative merit of ingenuity. Our own courts will probably disregard it, should the Senate even concur; and as for those of the United States, they will, out of all doubt, treat it as it ought to be treated, and brand it with ignominy. The next step will be to pass a law regulating descents, as it is called, under the provisions of

which the debtors of the deceased can meet his obligations with a coin technically called "puppies."

Jaaf drivels away. The black occasionally mumbles out his sentiments concerning past events, and the state of the country. An anti-renter he regards as he would a thief, and makes no bones of saying so. Sometimes he blunders on a very good remark in connexion with the subject, and one he made no later than yesterday, is worthy of notice.

"What dem feller want, Masser Hugh?" he demanded. "Dey's got one half of deir farms, and now dey wants tudder half. S'pose I own a cow, or a sheep, in par'nership, what right I got to say I will have him all? Gosh! dere no sich law in ole time. Den, who ebber see sich poor Injin! Redskin mis'rubble enough, make'e bess of him, but dis Injin so mis'rubble dat I doesn't won'er you can't bear him. Oh! how ole I do git—I *do* t'ink ole Sus can't last much longer, too!"

Old Susquesus still survives, but an object of great hatred to all the anti-renters, far and near.

The "Injin" system has been broken up, temporarily at least, but the spirit which brought it

into existence survives under the hypocritical aspect of "human rights." The Upright of the Onondagoes is insensible of the bad feeling which is so active against him, nor is it probable that most of those who entertain this enmity are conscious of the reason; which is simply the fact that he is a man who respected laws to the making of which he was a party, and preferred to suffer rather than to be guilty of an act of injustice.

NOTE BY THE EDITOR.

HERE the manuscript of Mr. Hugh Roger Littlepage, jun., terminates. That gentleman's feelings have probably forbidden his relating events so recent as those which have since occurred. It remains, therefore, for us to add a few words.

Jaaf died about ten days since, railing at the redskins to the last, and talking about his young massers and missuses as long as he had breath. As for his own descendants, he had not been heard to name *them* for the last forty years.

Susquesus still survives, but the "Injins" are all defunct. Public opinion has, at last, struck that tribe out of existence, and it is hoped that their calico bags have been transmitted to certain politicians among us, who, as certain as the sun rises and sets, will find them useful to conceal their own countenances, when contrition and shame come, as contrition and shame will be sure to succeed such conduct as theirs.

It may be well to add a word on the subject of the tone of this book. It is the language of a man who feels that he has been grievously injured, and who writes with the ardour of youth increased by the sense of wrong. As editors, we have nothing more to do with that than to see, while calling things by their right names, that language too strong for the public taste should not be

introduced into our pages. As to the moral and political principles connected with this matter, we are wholly of the side of the Messrs. Littlepages, though we do not think it necessary to adopt all their phrases—phrases that may be natural to men in their situations, but which would be out of place, perhaps, in the mouths of those who act solely in the capacity of essayists and historians.

To conclude:—Mr. Littlepage and Mary Warren were married, in St. Andrew's church, a few days since. We met the young gentleman, on his wedding tour, no later than yesterday, and he assured us that, provided with such a companion, he was ready to change his domicile to any other part of the Union, and that he had selected Washington, for the express purpose of being favourably situated for trying the validity of the laws of the United States, as opposed to the "thimble-rigging" of the New York Legislature. It is his intention to have every question connected with the covenants of his leases, that of taxing the landlord for property on which the tenant has covenanted to pay all taxes; that of distress for rent, when distress must precede the re-entry stipulated for by the leases; and that of any other trick or device which the brains of your "small potato" legislator may invent in order to wrong him out of his property. As for ourselves, we can only say, God give him success! for we are most deeply impressed that the more valuable parts of the institutions of this country can be preserved only by crushing into the dust this nefarious spirit of cupidity, which threatens the destruction of all moral feeling, and every sense of right, that remains among us.

In our view, Oregon, Mexico, and Europe, united against us, do not threaten this nation with one-half as much real danger as that which menaces it at this moment, from an enemy that is now in possession of many of its strong-holds, and which is incessantly working its evil under the cry of liberty, while laying deeper the foundation of a most atrocious tyranny.

I forgot to add, Mr. Littlepage significantly remarked, at parting, that should Washington fail him, he has the refuge of Florence open, where he can reside among the other victims of oppression, with the advantage of being admired as a refugee from republican tyranny.

THE END.

LONDON:
R. CLAY, PRINTER, BREAD STREET HILL.

00076456

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 15 March, 2016